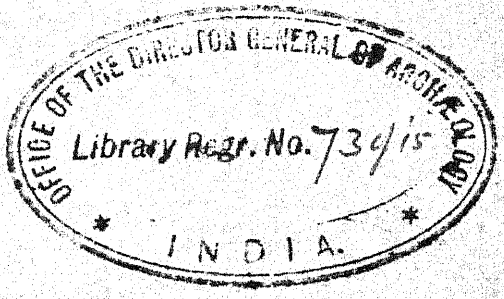
The Wisdom of the East Series Vol. 12

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Dr. S. A. KAPADIA

THE RELIGION OF THE SIKHS

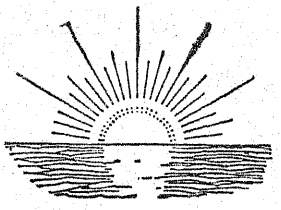


WISDOM OF THE EAST

THE RELIGION OF THE SIKHS

BY DOROTHY FIELD

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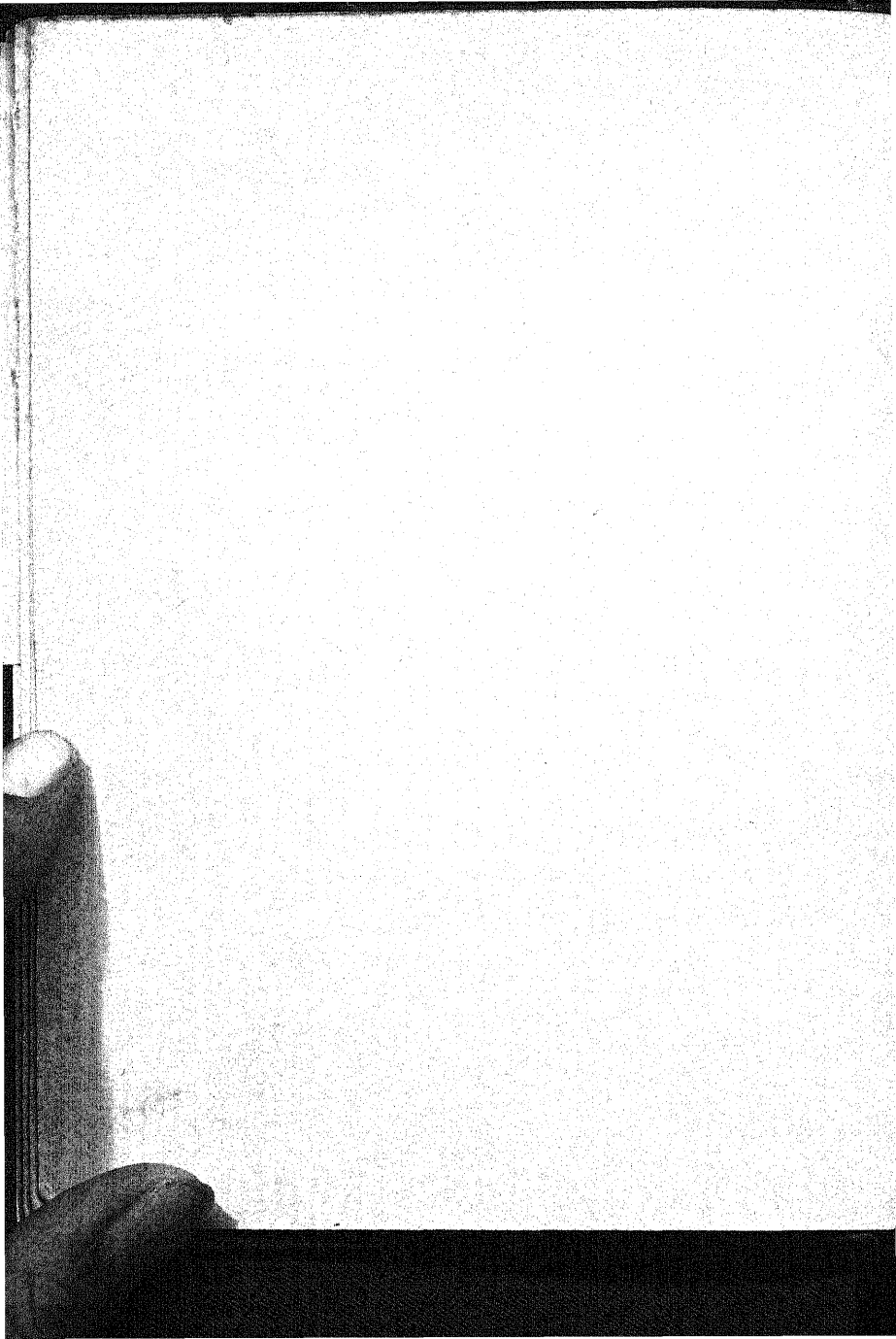
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ANY writer on the Religion of the Sikhs must necessarily be greatly indebted to Mr. Max A. Macauliffe's unique work on the subject, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Saints, and Authors.*

My special thanks are due to the Oxford University Press for kind permission to quote extensively from the translation of the hymns. The details of the lives of the Gurus are taken from the same source, together with the English version of the prophecies by Teg Bahādur and Gobind Singh.

D. F.



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EDITORIAL NOTE

THE object of the Editors of this series is a very definite one. They desire above all things that, in their humble way, these books shall be the ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West—the old world of Thought and the new of Action. In this endeavour, and in their own sphere, they are but followers of the highest example in the land. They are confident that a deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Oriental thought may help to a revival of that true spirit of Charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.
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THE RELIGION OF THE SIKHS

CHAPTER I

THE SIKH GURUS

THE Religion of the Sikhs is one of the most interesting at present existing in India, possibly indeed in the whole world. Being of comparatively late origin, it has not, until lately, received the attention of students, but both in its history and its theology it will well repay study. It is a pure, lofty monotheism, which sprang out of an attempt to reform and to simplify Muhammadanism and Hinduism, and which, though failing in this attempt, succeeded in binding together, like Judaism of old, a whole race in a new bond of religious zeal. The Sikhs [1] became a nation by reason of their faith,—and a fine nation of stalwart soldiers.

[1] Sikh, literally "disciple."

There is a tendency at the present day to reckon the Sikhs as a reformed sect of the Hindus; and this has become a matter for controversy among the Indians themselves. The word Hinduism is undoubtedly capable of a very wide application, but it is questionable whether it should be held to include the Sikhs in view of the fact that the pure teaching of the Gurus[1] assumed a critical attitude towards the three cardinal pillars of Hinduism, the priesthood, the caste system,[2] and the Vedas.[3] A reading of the Granth strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate world-religion, rather than as a reformed sect of the Hindus. The founder of the religion, Nānak, was on the one hand the spiritual descendant of monotheistic reformers *within* Hinduism, but on the other, Muhammadan influences caused him to break away very much more from the older faith, and to admit much that might be directly traced to the followers of the Prophet. The subsequent enmity of the

[1] Guru (literally *great*) signifies "teacher."

[2] The Hindus recognise four great castes: Brahmans, or priests; Kshatriyas, or warriors; Vaisyas, or traders; and Sudras, or serfs. These castes were mapped out in rigid demarcation, and were supposed to have been created separately, the Brahmans having sprung from the head of Brahma and the other castes from other parts of his body. It will be seen that this belief in a fundamental distinction between various human beings must have a strong effect on religious and social life.

[3] Veda (lit. *knowledge*) is a term given to the ancient Indian Scriptures, of which there were four sections.

Muhammadans, and the consequent development of martial tendencies on the part of the Sikhs, can only be understood in the light of history, and for that reason we will consider briefly the lives of the Sikh Gurus, before going further into the question of doctrine.

The Gurus: Nānak.—Bāba—or Father—Nānak, as he is usually called by pious Sikhs, was born in the year 1469 at Talwandi, in the present Lahore district of the Punjab. It is said that his birth was attended by miracles, and that an astrologer predicted his future greatness. Very early the boy displayed a great interest in religious matters. At the village school to which he went he astonished his teacher by making an acrostic on the alphabet, in which he emphasised the need for true religion. After this Nānak took to private study, and spent much time in meditation and in association with religious men. He wandered in the dense forests around his home, and there doubtless met the religious teachers and reformers of his day, ascetics and wanderers of every kind. From them he must have learned the subtleties associated with religious controversy, and for the first time the principles of Muhammadan doctrine. Nānak's parents were strict Hindus of the Khatri caste, and in due time the Brahman priest came to invest the boy with the sacred thread.[1] Nānak was only nine years old, but he protested against

[1] This ceremony initiates a boy into his caste.

the formality involved in such a ceremony by means of an improvised hymn:

"Make mercy thy cotton, contentment thy thread, continence its knot, truth its twist.

"That would make a *janeu*[1] for the soul; if thou have it, O Brahman, then put it on me.

"It will not break, or become soiled, or be burned, or lost.

"Blest the man, O Nānak,[2] who goeth with such a thread on his neck."

This hymn is typical of the manner in which Nānak afterwards conveyed most of his teaching. From that day onward he protested against the tyranny of caste, and the authority of the Brahman priesthood. He proceeded to learn Persian, in which language he was able to read many of the great Muhammadan writings, whose influence is shown so clearly in these early years. An acrostic composed on the letters of the Persian alphabet is entirely Muhammadan in tone, as, for example, the following sentence, which shows how far Nānak's mind had travelled in this direction:

"Renounce heresy, and walk according to the Shariat" (Muhammadan law).

[1] The sacred thread.

[2] In Oriental poetry it was the custom for the poet to address himself in the last line or lines. The subsequent Gurus of the Sikhs used "Nānak" as their pseudonym, thereby emphasising their belief that the spirit of Nānak entered sucessively into each of the teachers who followed him.

For a long while all attempts on the part of Nānak's parents to induce him to enter some trade in accordance with the tradition of his caste proved fruitless. The lad was continually engrossed in meditation, and had no care for the things of this world. Finally, however, he consented to enter the service of a Muhammadan governor, whom after a time he converted to his reformative doctrine. On the occasion of this conversion Nānak showed a power of mind-reading, and such profound religious insight that, before he left the city, both Hindus and Mussulmans came to do him honour. After this it is said that Nānak went into the wilderness, where he was severely tempted by Kaljug, the devil. He resisted every attack, however, and afterwards was granted a special vision of God, during which he held converse with Him, and received instruction for his mission. During this experience he composed an important part of the Japji,[1] which has since become the key-note of Sikh doctrine. Nānak then donned a religious costume, and definitely set forth on his life-work as teacher, or Guru. He took with him his minstrel Mardana, who accompanied his hymns upon the rebeck.[2] The greater part of the new

[1] A collection of hymns, from which extracts will be given later.

[2] The rebeck, or rabab, is an instrument of Arabian origin, having from four to six strings of goat-gut, with steel strings for resonance. It has fallen into disuse in Northern India.

teaching was conveyed by means of these hymns, improvised and chanted to well-known musical measures.[1] In this way Nānak discoursed with men of every caste and creed, but mostly with Brahmans, among whom he made many converts. He pointed out the inefficacy of caste and of the priesthood, protesting against formalism, whether Muhammadan or Hindu. He taught the existence of an all-powerful and loving Creator, who must be approached with simplicity and sincerity and by the loving repetition of the Sacred Name. Any one, of whatever caste or creed, who followed the Guru's teaching was held to have found salvation, even though he continued to live the ordinary life of the world. Much of Nānak's time was spent wandering and preaching in great simplicity of life—but he was married, as were all the Gurus after him. He discouraged ascetic practices, and taught that true religion was in the heart, whatever might be the walk in life. Whereas the Brahmans forbade either women or Sudras [2] to read the Vedas, Nānak held that all human beings were on an equality in the

[1] Indian writers enumerate six principal *rāgs* or musical measures. To these are allotted "wives" and "sons," which are modifications of the principal airs, and are often sung differently in different provinces of India. The hymns of the sacred book of the Sikhs were composed to thirty-one such musical measures.

[2] Women and Sudras were held to be beyond the pale of religion. In the *Institutes of Gautam* it is ordered that, if a

sight of God. The Guru travelled all over India spreading his doctrines; to the Himalayas, to Ceylon, and it is said that he even went as far westward as Mecca, the pole-star of Muhammadan religion. A story told of him on this occasion is interesting, as showing the manner in which he conveyed his teaching. When outside the holy city an Arab priest reproached him for turning his feet in the direction of God.

"Turn my feet," answered Nānak, "in a direction in which God is not."

Upon this, it is said, the priest seized the Guru's feet and dragged them round, whereupon the temple turned, following the revolution of his body. This is usually understood in a spiritual sense, meaning that all Mecca turned to his teaching. During the Guru's wanderings he wore a strange mixture of Hindu and Mussulman costumes. This is supposed to show that he did not regard the two religions as essentially opposed in their pure forms, and that his own doctrines might be acceptable to both. Before Nānak died in 1538 he appointed his disciple, Angad, as his successor, whom he had previously subjected to severe tests.

An event which occurred at Nānak's death shows that his teaching had not been altogether

Sudra hear the Vedas, his ears must be stopped with wax or molten lead; if he read the Vedas, his tongue must be cut out; if he possess the Vedas, the penalty is death.

unfavourably received. Hindus and Muhammadans disputed as to which should have the disposal of his body. He himself, before dying, commanded the Hindus to place flowers on his right and the Mussulmans on his left; they whose flowers were found fresh in the morning should have the disposal of the body. The next day the flowers on both sides were found fresh, but the body had disappeared.[1] The Sikhs erected a shrine, and the Muhammadans a tomb, in his honour, on the banks of the Ravi; but both buildings have been washed away by the river.

Angad.—Nine Gurus followed Nānak, and the first of these was Angad. Guru Angad's chief contribution to the religion was the invention of a special alphabet to be used for the writing of the Guru's hymns. Among the Hindus all sacred literature was composed in Sanscrit, even then a dead language—and it was entirely in keeping with the teaching of Nānak that this custom should be disregarded and the simple language of the people employed. Angad, however, modified the Punjābi alphabet, in order that a special *written* character should be used. This modification of Punjābi was called Guru-Mukhi, and was thenceforth specially employed for all Sikh sacred literature. The new alphabet contained but thirty-five letters, whereas Sanscrit had fifty-two.

[1] A similar story is told of the renowned Indian saint, Kabīr.

Guru Angad held the Guruship for fourteen years, and died in 1552.

Amar Dās.—Amar Dās, his servant, succeeded him. This Guru made his head-quarters at Goindwal on the Bias, where he built a well with eighty-four steps, which is still regarded as sacred by the Sikhs. When he died, in 1574, he appointed his son-in-law as his successor, after subjecting him to very severe tests. He gave him the name of Rām Dās. The second Guru is specially remembered by the Sikhs for his intense humility.

Rām Dās.—Guru Rām Dās instituted the system of Masands. These men were appointed to collect the offerings of the faithful for the support and spread of the Sikh religion. After a while they became dishonest, and the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, abolished them. Rām Dās continued the excavation of Amritsar (lake of nectar), which he had begun during the lifetime of Amar Dās. This work was completed by his son, Guru Arjan, who succeeded him. Whereas the first three Gurus had passed over their sons when appointing successors, the office of Guru now became hereditary.

Arjan.—Guru Arjan entered upon the Guruship in 1581, and with his reign a change came in the fortunes of the Sikhs. Arjan was perhaps, the most notable of all the Gurus. He was possessed of remarkably handsome appearance and was a fine poet as well as a man of great practical

ability. When he had completed the tank of Amritsar he set about the construction of the Har Mandar—or Golden Temple—which was to stand in the middle of the lake. He then proceeded to compile a volume of hymns, half of which were of his own composition, while the remaining half contained those of the previous Gurus, and of the earlier reformers, by whom they were influenced.[1] The editing of this volume was a very important matter, upon which no time or trouble was spared. When completed it was called the Granth Sāhib—or noble book—and later the *Adi* (or first) Granth, in contradistinction to the Granth which was compiled in the name of the tenth Guru.

With the vigour and initiative of Arjan's leadership the Sikhs were rising in importance, and since they now possessed both a sacred volume and a sacred city, the attention of the Emperor Akbar was directed towards them. Complaints were made to him of impiety in the Granth Sāhib, and of contempt shown to Muhammadan and Hindu deities. Upon examining the hymns, however, Akbar declared that he found no impiety in them, and he paid the Guru a reverential visit, asking for his prayers. Before long, however, the

[1] Fifteen reformers are represented altogether. They are: Jaidev, Nāmdev, Trilochan, Parmānand, Sadhna, Beni, Rāmānand, Dhanna, Pīpa, Sāin, Kabīr, Rāv Dās, Sūr Dās, Farid, and Bhīkan. The two last are Muhammadan saints.

tolerant Emperor died, and was succeeded by his fanatical and suspicious son, Jahāngīr. This ruler, believing Guru Arjan to be involved in political rebellion against him, summoned him to his court. There the complaints against the sacred volume were renewed, and Arjan was ordered to erase all passages that were supposed to reflect on Muhammadan or Hindu doctrine. This Arjan refused to do, declaring that his object was the spread of truth, and that:

"If in pursuance of this object this perishable body must depart, I shall account it great good fortune."

His wishes were realised; for, on refusing to submit, the Guru was handed over to his enemies, who subjected him to terrible tortures. To the last he remained firm. He died in 1606 as the result of this treatment.

Har Gobind.—The sixth Guru, Har Gobind, obeyed the injunctions of his father to "sit fully armed on his throne, and maintain an army to the best of his ability." He was the first Sikh Guru to take up arms, and to surround himself with a body-guard. He found his followers well prepared for the new rôle which they had to assume. The martyrdom of the Guru brought to a head certain tendencies that had always existed among the Sikhs. Though not hitherto bearers of arms, they had always valued fine physique and healthiness, both of mind and

of body. Their teaching had warned them to avoid morbid asceticism on the one hand and worldly excess on the other. They took a clear, sane view of life, having a simple trust in God and living natural human lives. They bathed daily in cold water—sang the Guru's hymns before dawn, ate meat, but abjured wine and tobacco. They took no part in pilgrimages—so prolific a cause of the spread of disease in India. A soldier who came to the second Guru for advice was told not to lay down his arms, but rather to fight loyally for his master. Thus the murder of Arjan by a Muhammadan emperor brought out in the Sikhs what was already latent ability.

Har Rāi.—Har Gobind upheld the sect against oppression during thirty-seven years, and his grandson, Har Rāi, who succeeded him, for sixteen. Neither of these Gurus left any hymns. They relied on the Granth Sāhib for the means of conveying their instruction, quoting suitable hymns from it on various occasions. Their history is secular rather than religious, but the teaching of Nānak was faithfully adhered to, and the sect remained a religious body. When Aurangzeb became emperor Har Rāi got into difficulties with him, and was obliged to send his eldest son as hostage to the Emperor's court.

Har Krishan.—This son appears to have been false to his religion, and therefore, his younger

brother, Har Krishan, was made eighth Guru by his father, although he was but five years and three months old. Har Rāi had refused to look the tyrant Aurangzeb in the face, and Har Krishan adopted the same course. The false brother—Rām Rāi—who wished the young Guru to come to Delhi in order that he might seize the Guruship, thought of a trick and persuaded him that the Sikhs of Delhi were suffering from the absence of a Guru. This scheme had its due effect, and the boy Guru started out for Delhi. He was still on his way to the court, preaching and discoursing as he went, when he was seized with small-pox and died, being at the time of his death but seven years old. Before his death the difficult question of a successor arose. Har Krishan indicated that the new Guru would be found in a distant village, and uttering Baba Bakāle—that is, Father Bakāle (the name of the village)—he offered the usual offerings,[1] and bowed to his absent successor. This mysterious appointment caused a certain amount of trouble. Twenty-two religious men in the village claimed the Guruship, and began to appropriate the offerings of Sikhs.

Teg Bahādur.—But at last an old man of the

[1] It was the custom of each Guru, when appointing his successor, to send for five paise, or farthings, and a cocoanut, and offer these, afterwards doing homage and circumambulating the new Guru.

name of Teg Bahādur was found, dwelling in silence and retirement. He was the great-uncle of Har Krishan and brother to the fifth Guru. When offered the Guruship he steadily refused it, but finally, upon the earnest representation of Sikhs, he came forth from retirement. He was made head of the sect in 1664. He was a man of gentle and rather melancholy disposition, with a reserve force of moral courage, which stood him in good stead later on. He spoke strongly against the use of tobacco, saying that when people were saved from the vile drug, when they abandoned the degrading smoke and cultivated their lands, their wealth and prosperity should greatly increase, but "when they inhale the vile vegetable they must grow poor and lose their wealth." About this time Aurangzeb was carrying on a bitter persecution of the Hindus, and owing to Moslem enmity the Sikhs were now much more friendly with them than with the Muhammadans. The Hindus, therefore, complained to the Guru. They pointed out that Aurangzeb was destroying their religion by force, burning down temples, breaking images, and ill-treating the worshippers. Teg Bahādur listened to their complaints and thought of a plan. He determined to offer himself as a martyr to the cause of true religion and freedom of thought. He, therefore, deliberately embroiled himself with the Emperor, pleading for the persecuted Hindus, and taking the opportunity of

declaring the new and purer doctrine of Sikhism. He said that a third religion had arisen which contained all that was best in Hinduism and Muhammadanism, and he besought the Emperor to adopt this. He knew well that such interference might mean death and that he would attract the attention of the infuriated Emperor to himself. His anticipations were realised, and he was ordered to court. Of his prison life in Delhi an interesting story is told. "It is said that one day, as he was on the top story of his prison, the Emperor saw him looking towards the south in the direction of the imperial zenana. Next day, he was sent for and charged with this grave breach of Oriental etiquette and propriety. The Guru replied:

"Emperor Aurangzeb, I was on the top story of my prison, but I was not looking at thy private apartments or at thy queens; I was looking in the direction of the Europeans, who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down thy *pardas* and destroy thy Empire."

A Sikh writer states that certain of these words became the battle-cry of the Sikhs in the assault on Delhi in 1857 under General John Nicholson, and that thus the prophecy of the ninth Guru was gloriously fulfilled.[1]"

The Emperor offered Teg Bahādur his freedom and great honour if he would accept Islām—

[1] *The Sikh Religion*, Max A. Macauliffe, vol. iv.

death being the alternative. But the Guru remained firm, warning Aurangzeb that his empire must perish. He was accordingly put to death in 1675. After the deed was carried out it is said that the Emperor was much distressed, and that he never wholly regained his peace of mind. While in prison Teg Bahādur sent for the copper coins and the cocoa-nut,[1] bowed in front of them and meditated on his absent son, Gobind Rāi.[2] Whatever the effect may have been of the martyrdom of Arjan—the fifth Guru—in bringing out the warlike tendencies of the Sikhs, this effect was redoubled in the case of the death of Teg Bahādur.

Gobind Singh.—His son Gobind Rāi immediately surrounded himself with a great army, and made himself so noble a warrior that it is said by the chronicler that "his splendour shone like the sun." Every disciple who came to him was enrolled as a soldier; instruction in the use of weapons was given daily. Many promises were made as to rewards for bravery in warfare. At the same time religious fervour grew, fostered by the singing of hymns, open-air preaching, meditation, and the repeating of the sacred Name. Opportunities for the display of military zeal soon

[1] See note page 21.

[2] Gobind Rāi—afterwards Gobind Singh—sent his father a couplet while in prison, which was afterwards included with the hymns of the ninth Guru in the Granth Sāhib.

arose; the jealousy of the Muhammadans increased and the Sikh army was frequently embroiled with the Emperor's men. There were small skirmishes followed by bigger battles, and these were fought with varying success. Sometimes the Sikhs were badly beaten; but whether vanquished or victorious they won renown for their bravery. They were men drawn from every caste or none, and their extraordinary fearlessness and loyalty to one another soon became proverbial.

But the great work of Gobind Singh's life was the institution of the *Khanda-di-Pāhul* or Baptism of the Sword.[1] This ceremony became so important, and its effects so vital and far-reaching, that it will not be out of place to give a detailed account of its institution.

At a critical moment in the fortunes of the Sikhs the Guru called his disciples together and asked if any were ready to die for him. Five professed their willingness to do so. In order to test their sincerity the Guru took each in turn into an enclosure, from whence he reappeared alone, exhibiting a dripping sword. None of the five, however, shrank from the ordeal. Only after

[1] Many Sikhs do not take this baptism. Those who adopt Gobind Singh's system in full are known as Singhs (lions), those who reject it as Sahijdharis (livers at ease). The former are all warriors, the latter traders or agriculturists.

the fifth had gone to apparent martyrdom was it discovered that the blood was that of a goat, and that all the Sikhs were still alive. The Guru then declared that Sikhism could now only be maintained by force of arms. He then poured water into an iron vessel and stirred it with a two-edged sword, repeating Guru Nānak's Japji, his own Jāpji, Guru Amār Dās' Anand, and some hymns of his own composition. It is said that as he was performing this ceremony his wife arrived carrying some Indian sweetmeats. She came out of curiosity, but the Guru asked her to throw the sweets into the holy water. He said that he had begun to establish the Khālsa as his sons, and that a mother was necessary at all times for sons. He also said that the sweets poured into the water typified the affection which was to exist between Sikhs. The Guru then gave five palmsful of the water to each of the chosen five. He sprinkled it five times on their hair and eyes and caused them to repeat *Wāhguru ji ka Khālsa, Wāhguru ji ki fatah*—"The Khālsa of God, victory to God."

These words became the new war cry of the Sikhs. The Guru also gave them the name of *Singh*, or lion, which was to be added to the name of each baptized disciple. The following instructions were then added.

Sikhs were to wear five articles whose names begin with a K. *Kes*, long hair, *Kangha*, a comb,

Kripan, a sword, *Kachh*, short drawers, and *Kara*, a steel bracelet. They were to be loyal to their masters, and never to turn their backs on a foe. A belief in the equality of all men was to take the place of all distinctions of caste. They were to rise at dawn, bathe, read the hymns of the Gurus, meditate on the Creator, and share a common meal. They were to abstain from all the superstitious practices of the Hindus—such as pilgrimages and idol-worship, suttee and infanticide. Meat might be eaten, provided the animal were slain by one blow from the hand of a Sikh. Tobacco, wine, and all stimulants were forbidden. Any breach of these rules would bring excommunication, reconciliation being through a fine and re-baptism. After giving these instructions the Guru desired the neophytes to baptize him in return. They at first protested, but he pointed out that the baptism put them all on a footing of equality, and the Khālsa,[1] as the sect was now called, was equal to the Guru. They yielded; and after this many thousands were baptized. Gobind Singh then sent to the Hill Rajahs, beseeching them to receive this baptism as a means of protecting themselves against the Turks. The Rajahs replied: "Each Turk can eat a whole goat. How can we, who only eat rice, cope with such strong men? Can sparrows kill hawks, or jackals tigers?" The

[1] From the Arabic *Khālis*, "pure."

Guru replied that his baptismal nectar could make one Sikh equal to many Turks, and that he could kill hawks with sparrows. On this, many Hindus, both of high and of low caste, accepted the baptism. Its results on the pariah were little short of miraculous. By its power men who had hitherto been regarded as unclean and polluted from their birth, were changed into exceptionally fine warriors. Before the time of the Sikh Gurus no general could have dreamed of raising an army from such outcastes; and this metamorphosis was accomplished despite the hidebound prejudice and innate conservatism of the Hindus.

The success of this famous institution brought thousands to the Guru's standard, and his army increased daily. Nevertheless it was a hard struggle to keep the sect alive, for there were enemies on all sides. Gobind Singh kept up the courage of his army by the singing of martial hymns, and by the force of his exceptional and brilliant personality. On one occasion he was questioned about the prophecies of his father. The Sikhs asked what their condition should be when the English arrived. The Guru replied:

"The English shall come with a great army. The Sikhs too, shall be very powerful, and their army shall engage that of the English. Sometimes victory shall incline to my Sikhs, sometimes to the English. As long as the religion of the

Sikhs remaineth distinct, so long shall the glory of those who profess it increase."

He went on to say that when the Sikhs become selfish and tangled in worldly affairs, corrupt and forgetful of their religion; when they relapse into Hinduism, "then the English shall rule and their glory increase." He then prophesied the fall of the Muhammadan empire and said:

"At the end of the Sambat year 1800 (A.D. 1743) the Sikhs shall take possession of many countries. Three years after that Sikhs shall spring out of every bush, and there shall subsequently be terrible warfare between the Sikhs and the Muhammadans. A powerful monarch shall come from Kandhar [1] and destroy countless Sikhs. He shall continue his progress of destruction to Mathura in Hindustan, and alarm many lands. None shall be able to withstand him. As prophesied by Guru Arjan, he shall raze the temple of Amritsar to the ground, but the Sikhs shall plunder his camp on his retreat from India. In the Sambat year 1900 (A.D. 1843) the Turks who survive shall lose their empire. A Christian army shall come from Calcutta. The Sikhs who are at variance with one another will join them. There shall be great destruction of life, and men and women shall be expelled from their homes. The

[1] This prophecy was fulfilled in 1762, when Ahmad Shāh marched against the Sikhs, and blew up the Golden Temple.

Sikhs who abandon their arms and join the Brahmans against the English, shall have great sufferings. The real Sikhs shall hold their ground and survive."

On another occasion it was pointed out to Gobind Singh that the Sikhs were much less numerous than the Hindus and Muhammadans. Upon this he made the following reply, which has a special interest to-day:

"What God willeth shall take place. When the army of the Turks cometh, my Sikhs shall strike steel on steel. The Khālsa shall then awake, and know the play of battle. Amid the clash of arms the Khālsa shall be partners in present and future bliss, tranquillity, meditation, virtue, and divine knowledge. Then shall the English come, and, joined by the Khālsa, rule as well in the East as in the West. The holy Baba Nānak shall bestow all wealth on them. The English shall possess great power, and by force of arms take possession of many principalities. The combined armies of the English and the Sikhs shall be very powerful as long as they rule with united councils. The empire of the English shall vastly increase, and they shall in every way attain prosperity. Wherever they take their armies they shall conquer, and bestow thrones on those who assist them. Then in every house shall be wealth, in every house happiness, in every house rejoicing, in every house religion, in every

house learning, and in every house a woman. The English shall rule for a long time."[1]

Guru Gobind Singh repeated the teaching of his father against tobacco. One day when hunting, he came upon a field where the plant grew. He reined in his horse, and inveighed against it. He said that it burned the chest, induced nervousness, palpitation, bronchitis, and other diseases, finally causing death. He, therefore, begged Sikhs to abstain, concluding: "Wine is bad, bhang destroyeth one generation, but tobacco destroyeth all generations."

After the death of Aurangzeb the Guru became on personally good terms with the new Emperor, Bahādur Shāh. They went hunting together, and the Emperor appears to have had a wholesome fear of the Guru. Nevertheless, the enmity between the Sikhs and the Muhammadans continued. Gobind Singh was on his way to Southern India after a battle when he was stabbed by a Muhammadan, and received a wound which afterwards, reopening, resulted in his death. Before he died, he told his Sikhs that the Khālsa was now thoroughly established, both its religious teaching and the laws for everyday life having become sufficiently definite. There was, therefore, no need to establish a new Guru. The Khālsa and the Granth Sāhib were for the future to be revered as Guru, and the spirit of Gobind

[1] *The Sikh Religion*, Max A. Macauliffe, vol. v.

Singh might be met by "diligently searching the hymns of the sacred volume." Wherever five faithful Sikhs were assembled, Gobind Singh himself would be in the midst of them. They should be considered "priests of all priests," and should have power to absolve sins. The Guru bowed before the Granth Sāhib as his successor, and gave final directions as to charity before he died in 1708, having been Guru for thirty-three years.

It will be seen that the work of Gobind Singh was somewhat different to that of the other Gurus. His special task was to protect the sect at a moment when it might have perished, and for this work he is worthy to stand by Nānak, the founder of the whole movement. But it must not be imagined that because he was a fine warrior he was less spiritual or less religious than his predecessors. He made religious fervour the backbone of all his warlike doctrines. He united practical skill with mystical meditation; and the results speak for themselves. He wrote very many hymns; which, setting aside those in praise of the sword, contain a stronger vein of pantheistic mysticism than do those of the other Gurus. He also made greater claims for himself as prophet.

Among the writings that he has left us there is a curious account of his own spiritual history, in which he tells how God sent him into the world

to help the world when it was going astray. When he desired his Sikhs to baptize him he said: "I am the son of the immortal God, who has sent me into the world to exalt religion." He says that he did not desire to come, but that God "remonstrated earnestly" with him.

From the foregoing history of the Sikh Gurus it will be seen how greatly the development of their religion was influenced by the turn of events. At first, as we have noticed, Nānak's religious teaching was more favourable to the Muhammadans than to the Hindus, for with the latter he was constantly in difficulties over questions of caste. The nervous superstition and the tyranny of the Moghul rulers, however, soon changed the state of affairs. Easily crediting any story against the Gurus, these emperors brought about the death of two of the most prominent of them. From the time of Gobind Singh onward the bitterest enmity existed between Sikhs and Muhammadans. In their refuge among the hills in Northern India the Khālsa continued to develop their splendid physique—to keep alive the flame of religious zeal, and to maintain themselves as a separate nation. They marched against the British in the Sikh wars of 1845 and 1847; but, once defeated, they remembered the prophecies of the ninth Guru and became passionately loyal to their English masters. The finest and most staunch native soldiery, they saved the

Empire in 1857; and they have stood by the British nation on countless occasions since.

The position of present day Sikhs [1] is a curious one. Where the baptism of Gobind Singh is persisted in they are likely to remain a separate nation; but when this falls into disuse they show a tendency to reabsorb into Hinduism. They employ Brahman priests at marriages, deaths, and at all important domestic events. In reality the pure teaching of Nānak discredits the formalities of Hindu religion, and, therefore, in so far as Sikhs submit to these they are falling back from the highest teaching of the Granth. Pure Sikhism is far above dependence on Hindu ritual, and is capable of a distinct position as a world-religion, so long as Sikhs maintain their distinctiveness.

The religion is also one which should appeal to the Occidental mind. It is essentially a practical religion. If judged from the pragmatical standpoint—which is a favourite point of view in some quarters—it would rank almost first in the world. Of no other religion can it be said that it has made a nation in so short a time. That it should have transformed the outcaste Indian—a notoriously indolent and unstable

[1] See note, page 25. Besides the two main divisions of Sikhs there are certain minor sects which include several orders of ascetics. Very many shades of opinion are held among the members of these various bodies, some of their views being almost indistinguishable from ordinary Hinduism.

person—into a fine and loyal warrior, is little short of a miracle. This practical and political side to the question should have a special interest for the West; and above all, for Englishmen, who have so largely reaped the benefits of this grand faith. But apart from political considerations, the religious aspect is one which deserves special attention. Sikhism stands for a great body of religious thought in India, hitherto insufficiently recognised as an inherent factor. Through various nihilistic, pantheistic, or atheistic phases of Hinduism, and despite a vast number of elaborate observances, the ideals of pure monotheism have prevailed; from the time of their foreshadowing in the Vedas, through the work of such men as Rāmānuj and Rāmānand to their final epitome in the Sikh Gurus. There they gained new fervour from Islāmic influence, and, developing warlike ideals as the result of oppression, produced one of the great world-religions, the latest to obtain recognition in Europe. The history of this development of monotheistic ideals within Hinduism, and of the religious influence of Islām, will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS ORIGINS OF SIKHISM—HINDU MONOTHEISM AND CONNECTION WITH ISLĀM

We have seen that on the one hand Sikhism has its source in a movement *within* Hinduism, and that on the other it owes something to the foreign element of Muhammadanism. It will now be possible to look into this a little more closely. How far the doctrine of the one Supreme God, as proclaimed by Nānak, was the *direct* result of Muhammadan influence, it is difficult to say. We have seen that in Nānak's youth he was greatly interested in Persian writings and in the doctrines of Moslem saints with whom he came in contact. Probably much of his protesting zeal, of his fury against idolatry, of his bitterness and violence against those with whom he did not agree, was the result of these excursions into Islām. But while fully acknowledging this we must be careful not to attribute the Sikh doctrine of Divine Unity solely to the influence of Muhammadanism, for such doctrine had always been present within Hinduism. The saints and

reformers who preceded the Sikh Gurus, and to whom the latter were so much indebted for the very phrases used in their hymns, were mostly Hindu, or, if Muhammadan, had been largely influenced by Hinduism. Their declaration of the Unity of God was part of a natural Hindu development.

Monotheistic Thought grows from Polytheism.—From the very earliest times in the Rig Veda [1] a tendency to monotheism may be noticed. One god is frequently chosen from the rest of the pantheon and exalted in some particular hymn till he becomes supreme and infinite, all lesser deities being but his servants and emanations from him. The acknowledgement of some such secondary beings in no way conflicts with monotheistic doctrine, for in Catholic Christendom or in Muhammadanism the existence of angels and archangels is admitted. This tendency to raise first one god and then another to the position of Supreme Deity gradually gained ground, but with the ascendancy of the Brahman priesthood it was counterbalanced by another development. Out of the more general polytheism of the Vedas a mystical and subtle philosophy arose, by which God became the neuter World-Soul, immanent in

[1] The *Rig Veda* is one of the oldest literary productions in the world, some parts of it dating from as far back as two thousand years before Christ. It is called by Sikhs the "white" Veda.

matter. He thus lost the attributes of personality and could only be expressed by negation and realised by meditation. This pantheism finds full expression in such texts as the following, which represents the spirit of the Vedānta : [1]

> "Verily this all is Brahman;
> As such, one should worship It in stillness."

But such doctrine left little room for the personal devotion of man to God ; moreover, it was esoteric, demanding mystical understanding and philosophic insight. It was jealously guarded by the priesthood in mid-India.

Persists during Pantheism.—In the out-lands, however, reactions against this pantheism were continually taking place ; returns to monotheism, or the belief in the personality of God and in the possibility of approaching Him with prayer and devotion. These movements frequently arose in the warrior caste and they asserted the rights of the laity as against those of the priesthood.

Forms the Vishnuite Churches.—The greatest of them all was the development of Vishnuite theology, which originated in the sect of the Bhāgavātas, who first evolved the theory of Bhakti, or passionate devotion of man to God.

[1] Vedānta (lit. *Veda's end*) is a term applied to various Hindu works, commentaries on the Vedas, which set forth this Hindu pantheistic philosophy.

Another reaction of a different kind against the Brahman priesthood was that of Buddhism, which, instead of returning to belief in a more personal God, introduced a greater agnosticism, emphasising the necessity of right action as against dogmatic belief, subtle philosophy, or elaborate ritual. Ritual had gradually been evolved by the Brahman priests, who felt that their teaching could only be upheld in this way, since for the multitude their philosophy could have but little meaning.

Partial Victory of the Priests and Pantheism.—All these reactions, whether monotheistic, or agnostic, made for simplification, and endeavoured to lessen mysteries and banish ritual. One by one, however, they were mastered by the priestly influence, which, while yielding something, always contrived to win a three-part victory. Thus the Vishnuite Churches, which originated in a monotheistic reaction against pantheism, a rebellion of the laity against the priesthood, became gradually an orthodox part of Hinduism, with all its ritual and much of its mystical philosophy superadded. In the same way Buddhism was partly absorbed and partly expelled.

Monotheism borrows Fervour from Islām.—It will thus be seen that monotheistic doctrine had never been absent from Hinduism, though it belonged less to orthodoxy than to particular movements of reform. Where the later religion

of the Prophet came into contact with Hinduism it helped to fan the flame of monotheistic devotion, and to give it exclusiveness and proselytising zeal. The Hindu Bhāgats [1] or saints, who preceded Nānak, show to a considerable extent this influence of Islām, especially perhaps, the greatest of all, Kabīr,[2] who when a child had been adopted by Muhammadans.

The Older Reformers quietistic.—Speaking generally, however, there was not sufficient combativeness among these earlier reformers to lead to the formation of a powerful new religion. They were too deeply imbued with poetic mysticism—with the spirit of quietism and toleration—to have much sympathy with aggressive ideals. No doubt they protested vigorously against idolatry, formality, and caste tyranny, but in practice they did not break away too violently from the religion of their country. Kabīr, for instance, far from defying Brahmanic traditions as to the eating of meat, would not permit so much as the plucking of a flower, whereas Nānak deemed all such scruples to be superstitious, and openly allowed the eating of all kinds of flesh food except that of the cow.

[1] The word Bhāgat is derived from a Sanscrit word Bhakti = love or devotion.

[2] It has been suggested that Kabīr was influenced by Christianity. It is curious that a sacramental meal has been found among the observances of his followers, but this may be the remains of Muhammadan Suflism.

The Sikhs energetic.—Again, regarding caste, the vigour of Sikh teaching did actually succeed in breaking down age-long barriers, and in reclaiming a vast out-caste population. In Nānak, then, all the reformative tendencies within Hinduism were combined, and he associated with them a greater amount of intolerance than had any of the previous reformers. In other words, he borrowed more from Islām than his predecessors had done.

Enmity of Islām.—It was natural, however, that this zeal of the Sikh Gurus should come into contact with the same element in the religion from which they had borrowed, and that antagonism between the two should arise, even had not political enmity provided an immediate cause. The fact that Nānak was originally very friendly to the Muhammadans was soon forgotten; bitterness arose between the followers of the two religions, persecution by the one being largely accountable for the magnificent martial development of the other.

Consequent Reaction towards Orthodox Hinduism.—This state of affairs naturally induced something of a reaction on the part of the Sikhs towards orthodox Hinduism—a reaction which has gone on until this day.

Inconsistency with Hinduism.—We have seen, however, that Nānak rejected certain conspicuous features of the religion of his country,

and that, therefore, however much he may have borrowed in the matter of doctrine, his religion remains distinct and complete in itself, and is not in any way dependent on association with Hinduism.

CHAPTER III

THE DOCTRINES OF THE SIKHS

Main doctrines of all religions.—These concern God, His nature and attributes, and man, and the means by which salvation may be attained. There are three aspects under which the nature of God has been conceived. In the first He is omnipotent Being, Ruler and Creator of the world, the Father and Judge of men. In the second He becomes incarnate for the salvation of mankind or is specially manifested in some teacher or Guru. In the third he is Immanent Spirit, the Life and Soul of all that is. In each great religion, special prominence is given to some one feature of doctrine—all others being modified accordingly—and thus individual distinctiveness is obtained.

Their Comparative Importance.—For instance, in Judaism the unity and omnipotence of God receive most emphasis, so that we always associate the Jews with an exclusive monotheism. The same may be said of Muhammadanism—except that here the importance of the Prophet stands out almost as prominently. In philosophic Hindu-

ism Divine Immanence is the first essential, while in Christianity all else pales into insignificance beside the splendour of the Divine Incarnation.

Outstanding Feature of Sikhism: The One God.—Sikhism—in common with all great deistic religions—lays most stress on the unity and omnipotence of God.

"There is but one God, the true," is the constant reiteration of the hymns. He is the only Reality, beside which everything else is false. He is formless, great, all-powerful, absolutely holy, without limits of any kind, and He cannot be grasped by the finite mind. He has less definiteness than the personalities of Allah or Jehovah, and He is therefore more often described in terms of negation, calling to mind those used in the Vedānta.[1] For instance:

"By thinking I cannot obtain a conception of Him, even though I think hundreds of thousands of times."

"He hath no colour nor outline."

"He is not old, nor is He young."

"He feeleth nor heat nor cold."

[1] See note page 38. The pantheistic Doctrine of the Vedānta necessitated the use of negations, for the absolute Brahma, the world-soul of the Universe could possess no positive *qualities* of goodness, mercy and the like. Thus:

"This Self is nay, nay: not to be grasped, for He is not grasped; not to be broken, for He is not broken; unclinging, for He clings not; He is not bound, He trembles not, He takes no hurt." (Beihad-āranyaka Upanishad.)

"He hath no father and no mother,"
and so on. But yet He possesses many of the attributes of personality. He is an Ocean of Mercy, the Friend of Man, the Friend of Sinners, the Bountiful, Destroyer of Sorrow, Cherisher of the Poor. "He is wise, generous, beautiful, infinite." He "beholdeth" and "heareth" his servants whom He loves. He is both Father and Mother to man.

"God is the Father and Mother of all, and taketh care of them"; or He may be described as Lover or Spouse to the human soul.

Saith Nānak, "God alone is the Spouse of all." "My Spouse hath taken my hand and made me his Queen." This metaphor is the most usual.

But God's orders are absolutely binding, and, like Allah of the Koran, His ways cannot be questioned. He does what He pleases; by His order everything is maintained from moment to moment, and yet He is described as being "perfectly unconcerned."

"God the unconcerned is happy."

His glory and splendour are a continuous source of praise in the Sikh hymns, together with His consistency:

> "Thou art the same in every age,
> Thou art ever and ever the same."

Divine Incarnation denied.—The Sikh Gurus

denied that the Supreme Deity could take upon himself the body of an individual man.

"God is immovable, imperishable, how can He obtain a body?"

"Some in their hearts accept incarnations of God, but I have renounced all vain religion."

Man might achieve union with God, and the reality of this union is emphasised in the strongest terms.

"They who meditate on God have become absorbed in Him."

But the distinction between such raising of manhood into God and the limiting of the Godhead in an individual man was carefully guarded. Gobind Singh says of himself:

"I performed such penance that I became blended with God."

"I am the son of the immortal God, and am sent into the world to restore religion."

But he adds:

"They who call me the Supreme Being shall fall into the pit of hell."

This attitude was taken up by all the Gurus, who denied that they were incarnations of the Deity, but admitted that they had obtained Divine union.

"There is no difference between God and His saints."

Divine Immanence.—The splendour of the transcendent Deity and the divine mission of the

Guru are combined with a firm belief in the indwelling and all-pervading Spirit. So strong indeed is this that the Sikh Gurus often use terms of orthodox pantheism very similar to those of the earlier Hindu Scriptures.[1]

"Thou art in the tree, Thou art in its leaves. Thou art space, Thou art time, Thou art fasting, Thou art wisdom, Thou alone art, Thou alone art."

But the pantheism of the Gurus is continually qualified by renewed insistence on the transcendent Deity. He remains the Being distinct from all the world. To mankind he is as the ocean to the dew-drop, complete and self-existent, but yet the true self of every individual.

Doctrines borrowed from Hinduism.—The doctrines as to the general construction of the universe are much the same as those of Hinduism in general. All Indian thought which really belongs to the country[2] accepts in one form or another the theories of Karma, Reincarnation, Nirvāna, Māya; and deities as described in the Vedas. Sikhism is no exception. It stands for monotheism placed above and beyond all these.

Karma.—Karma (lit. *works*) is the law by which

[1] Compare: "Thou are woman, Thou art man, Thou art boy and maiden; Thou art the old man tottering on the staff; Thou art born with face looking all ways. (Svetāsvatara Upanishad.)

[2] The religion of the Prophet was a later and foreign element.

a man is bound to reap the fruit of his own acts. All actions, good or bad, carry their Karma with them. If a man lead a good life, good Karma will be produced, and he will be born again in circumstances advantageous for his spiritual development. If his actions are bad, he will be set back in the spiritual path, and must find out his mistake by suffering, either mental, or material, or both. The law of Karma is supposed to have absolute sway throughout the universe. It accounts for every occurrence from moment to moment, from the fall of a leaf to the display of genius. The more orthodox philosophy of India taught that only by *knowledge*—the understanding of spiritual realities gained through an infinite succession of re-births, could the ego be set free to blend with the All-Soul of the universe, that is, with the Divine Life from which it came. Wherever the idea of a personal Deity obtained, however, this doctrine was apt to become modified, and the law of Karma less rigid. There was frequently the suggestion of a way of escape—escape, that is, from payment of the uttermost farthing—which should be open even to the uninitiated. This was sometimes by faith, or by impassioned devotion (Bhakti) to the personality of God, as in the Vishnuite Churches. This desire to find a short cut to Nirvāna, which should be possible for all, gradually evolved the idea of "salvation," i.e. the

alternative to an infinite round of transmigration. Nānak's special way of salvation will be described presently.

Nirvāna.—The all-desirable condition of Nirvāna has always been a subject for controversy among European scholars. The word comes from *nir* = out, and *va* = to blow, and the meaning has been somewhat differently interpreted even among Indians themselves. Speaking generally, it would be safe to say that it has never meant *annihilation*, but rather *absorption* into *the Absolute*. Where the belief in a personal Deity is strong, Nirvāna has stood for unity of the creature with the Creator, and thus in the Granth Sāhib it means the cessation of individual consciousness in the All-consciousness of God. Its realisation is compared to the blending of two streams.

Māya.—Creation, with its accompanying law of Karma, was originally brought into being by the agency of Māya (illusion). God draws a veil of illusion over Himself, in order that He may appear temporarily as separate manifestations. How exactly this is done has been variously explained by different Indian sects. Sikhism, though not altogether consistent concerning the *nature* of the illusion, gives the *reason* for its existence as God's sport:

> "Māya bewitcheth the world,
> All that is God's play."

This idea frequently occurs in the Indian Scriptures.

Creation.—With the help of Māya God is able to assume manifoldness, and He thus appears as demi-gods, universes, mankind, animal, and plant life. He, however, remains *in his true nature* distinct from all, thus bearing out the principle of monotheism, and he takes a personal interest in this work of "Creation."

The Hindu Trinity.—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiv are the first created beings, the famous Hindu Trinity whose potential existence is admitted by the Sikhs.

"One Māya, in union with God, gave birth to three acceptable children. One of them is the Creator, the second the Provider, the third performeth the function of Destroyer.

"As it pleaseth God, He directeth them by His orders," or again, with a mysterious allusion to the Logos:

"From the self-existent proceeded Māya, whence issued a Word which produced Brahma and the rest."

After the Hindu Trinity hundreds of demi-gods appear, and then all other forms of life. The gods of the Hindu pantheon meet with some contempt in the Sikh Scriptures, however, as being themselves imperfect and as having withdrawn honour from God to themselves. Belief in their existence in no way compromises the

monotheism of the Sikhs. At most they only make the same spiritual claims as the hierarchy of saints and angels in Catholic Christendom.

Nānak's Way of Salvation.—Subtle philosophy was foreign to the purpose of the Sikh Gurus. They accepted the general Indian doctrine as to the construction of the universe so long as it was possible to combine it with their own fervent monotheism. Though they were susceptible to the influence of mysticism, this is not their most prominent characteristic, and their manner of controversy was somewhat crude. Their method of reasoning was, generally speaking, a passionate declaration of the value of real religion and bitter sarcasm against those who proved false to it. Their service to the thought of their day was above all things a practical one. It was the proclamation of a *new way of salvation*, a new means of escape from things as they were. In the somewhat pessimistic religious thought of the time, the round of transmigration seemed to have become so endless that the belief in a personal God who could grant such a boon was in itself an inspiration. Nānak, starting from these premises, evolved a purer and simpler scheme than any that had found credence in his time.

How to escape Karma.—The aim was to escape from Karma. It must be remembered that Karma, *however good*, necessitates re-birth. Until Karma is destroyed the soul is not free

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to enter Nirvāna, and some way must therefore be found by which even good actions shall cease to bear with them the necessity for "results." They must be wrought "unfettered," "uninvolved," that is, only in the love of God and without hope of fruit. Only thus can they lead *to* God and not *away from* Him. If done from any other motive they involve the temporary reward which befits such a motive: "As a man sows so shall he reap," and a body must be reassumed. Thus the distinction is clearly made by Nānak, between right actions performed for the love of God and those which spring from any other motive. But to learn how to act rightly was no easy task. The wish to do so was not enough; *the way must be found.*

The Guru.—To this end the first essential was a true Guru.

"Without the Guru man is ruined by wandering."

"Māya hath bound this world on all sides by her cable. Without a Guru it cannot be untied. Man groweth weary in striving."

"He who serveth the Guru knoweth the way; without the Guru it cannot be found."

In India it has at all times been the custom for young men to be apprenticed to a Guru as religious guide. Every great saint had his Guru. But Nānak held that the religious world had gone astray and that therefore a new

and direct revelation was again necessary. He therefore declared that his own Guru was God, who had specially instructed him how to lead back the world to right faith. All those, therefore, who came to him for religious guidance, or who received it through his disciples, his successors or the Sikh hymns, had found the true Guru, and thus the possibility of emancipation.

The First Essential. Simplicity.—The keynote of the Guru's instruction was greater simplicity in belief and worship. All elaboration, whether of thought or of deed, was to be discarded. Faith in the one true God was absolutely necessary, but the thousands of demi-gods were not to be heeded. Pilgrimages, rosaries, fasts, asceticism, were in themselves of no avail. Nānak admitted that with sincerely religious people these things might be useful, but when the world was lost in error they became mere corruptions. They helped to increase formality and hypocrisy. Some practices were also harmful and cruel, such as the burning of widows, the exposure of girl-babies, and the extreme asceticism practised by hermits. Such things were to be abolished absolutely, and simple obedience and love to God were to take their place. No idols were to be permitted, and ceremonies should be discarded as vain.

"If I please Him, that is my place of pilgrimage to bathe in; if I please Him not, what ablutions shall I make?"

Salvation for All.—The new simplicity involved *salvation for all*, in whatever walk of life. Whether a man had the opportunity of making pilgrimage or of practising asceticism, whether he were of high caste or a pariah, whether he had knowledge of the sacred writings or whether he were illiterate, mattered little; wise or foolish, ignorant or learned, rich or poor, all had their chance of salvation. Even the sexes were to be regarded as equal. The spiritual pride of hermits and ascetics was especially condemned.

"Why go searching God in the forest? I have found Him at home," says Nānak.

Unworldliness.—To live the ordinary family life was deemed no disgrace, and salvation could equally well be obtained in this way. But such healthy saneness of outlook involved no lack of spirituality, no compromise with materialism. "Burn worldly love," says Nānak. He includes it as one of the five deadly sins. To be in the world but not of the world was to be the glory of Sikhs, "They dwelt," says Bhāi Gur Dās, "as hermits among their families."

The Name.—Human beings could find their ground of equality and their way to spirituality in the repetition of God's name. The custom of repeating a sacred word was already an inherent factor of Hindu religion, and many worshippers of Krishna repeat his name thousands of times daily. Nānak approved the practice, but he

substituted a new name for God in order that there should be no association with the various existing conceptions of the Deity. He also made safeguards against the danger of formality. The new title was Wāhguru, the derivation of which has been differently given in the Sikh Scriptures.[1] To utter Wāhguru with love and devotion and with earnest meditation was held to be an efficient means of drawing near to God ; of raising the soul above the things of this world, and of putting all men on an equality. If done with a perfectly pure heart the effect of this utterance might be tremendous. It could even result in divine union. In any case it was to supersede all the religious observances of the Hindus.

"Hearing the Name is equal to bathing at the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage."

Meditation.—The Name, uttered with meditation, was declared to be by far the best form of worship. But meditation was in itself at all times to be recommended and should be constantly resorted to.

"They who meditate on God are emancipated ; for them death's noose is broken."

[1] One explanation is that in the four great ages of the world, God was worshipped under the names of Wasdev, Hari, Gobind, and Rām. The Guru made out of the initials of these four names the word Wāhguru which is praise of God and the Guru. Gur Dās's explanation is that "wah means congratulation, and guru means great. Both words combined, therefore, mean congratulation to the Great God."

"All fear has departed from those who meditate on the fearless God."

Meditation on the abstract virtues and on the Gurus was also recommended, and Sikhs were never to wait for special times and special places. No conditions were necessary, for, as Nānak once told some astrologers:

"The auspicious time is when men turn to God."

Other Forms of Worship.—Meditation on God and utterance of the Name are the most important means of worship, but other forms of devotion are also necessary. The disciple must listen carefully to the Gurus' instruction or read it in his hymns. He must chant God's praises in the company of the saints. Gradually the custom grew up of chanting the Gurus' hymns as regular services both morning and evening and at other stated times. The Japji, for instance—a collection of hymns by Guru Nānak—is repeated in the early morning and every Sikh is supposed to know it by heart. An additional morning service is the Asa ki Wār,[1] a collection of hymns by various Gurus. The Rahirās are repeated in the evening when the lamps are lit, and the Sohila at bed-time. The Anand can be read at Sikh marriages, and there are special prayers for funerals; and also hymns to be chanted at baptism. These

[1] An account of these services is given before the selections from the Granth Sāhib.

services contain doctrine, many are in praise and adoration of God, and a few are prayers, confessions of weakness and sin; but these last are very much in the minority, the great bulk of the Sikh Scriptures being either praise or precept, as will be seen by examples given later. But none of these observances were to take the place of meditation and the repetition of the sacred word.

The Company of the Saints.—Association with holy men is another very helpful means to salvation:

"They who meet the society of the saints shall be saved," says Nānak; and throughout the Sikh teaching the value of such company is emphasised. Individuals may lose sight of the truth, but among the saints fervour is increased and religious understanding is developed.

Works.—It is sometimes charged against religions of the East that too much stress is laid upon meditation and mental purification, and too little upon right action. Nānak was careful to point out that no amount of meditation or worship could atone for faith without works. "Without good works no one can be saved."

"Make the practice of religion your board and truth your pieces," says Guru Arjan, using the game of dice as his simile. There were five positive virtues to be gained, five deadly sins to be

avoided.[1] Much stress is laid on all the ethical virtues. But the love of God and the love of man were to be the principal motives, whether in worship or in action, the vanity of everything apart from these is insisted upon.

Predestination.—Throughout the Sikh hymns there is a strong element of fatalism or predestination.

"By perfect good fortune God hath caused us to meet the Guru."

"By predestination we have found the Name," and so on perpetually. It must be remembered, however, that this quality of fatalism, usually associated with the East, is very largely modified by conjunction with the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma. If a man fails in one life to meet the Guru, to find the true Name, the society of the saints, pure ethics, and so on, he may do so in the next; and this with increasing probability, since obviously the new doctrines will have spread. Despite the constant allusions to God's pre-ordained order, it cannot be said that Nānak despised the gift of free-will. Had the Sikhs allowed themselves to drift with circumstances they could never have defended their religion against immense odds, or become a powerful and separate nation. In so

[1] The five virtues were contentment, compassion, piety, patience, and morality; the five deadly sins, lust, anger, covetousness, worldly love, and pride.

far as a belief in destiny has actually had hold on them it has helped to make them fearless in battle, and able to face death unflinchingly.

Effort.—Indeed, the need of will-power appears everywhere throughout the religion. It is difficult to find the true Guru; it is difficult to repeat the Name; it is difficult to meditate rightly, to perform good works, to escape from sin, to love God and one's brother rightly. Yet all these things are necessary to salvation.

Social Life among the Sikhs.—Social life, as we have seen, was to be definitely improved under Sikhism, and caste prejudice and Hindu corruptions were to be abolished.

Position of Women.—But the most notable social improvement was the emancipation of women. Many women found salvation through the Guru's teaching. A woman assisted at the inauguration of the Pahul, and another was the only disciple who managed to enter the prison where Teg Bahādur was confined before his martyrdom. She brought him food and drink and otherwise ministered to him. Guru Amar Dās refused to receive a Ranee who had visited him while she was closely veiled, and on more than one occasion the Gurus protested against the tyranny of the *parda*.

Marriage.—It also appears that Guru Nānak intended to establish monogamy. On one occasion he said: "It is God who arrangeth

marriages. He maketh no mistake, and those whom He hath once joined He joineth for ever."

Another famous Sikh wrote: "Be chaste with one wife"; and in another Sikh work is found: "Be satisfied with one wife; that befits a good man."

The fact that certain of the Gurus married more than one wife has been explained in this way:

"The Gurus were so trusted and held in such high estimation that religious people frequently thought it their duty to vow to them their lives, their children, and their property. Several Sikhs used, on the birth of daughters, to register oaths that they would only bestow them on the Guru or his relations. Girls so dedicated were always styled 'mothers' by the Sikhs, and none might marry them except those to whom they were vowed. This, to a large extent, will explain the polygamy of some of the Gurus."

Warfare.—The teaching as to warfare appears only in the Granth of the Tenth Guru—that is in the hymns of Gobind Singh. But we have seen that martial tendencies were not altogether foreign to the Sikhs before that time. Nānak's simple view of life, his teaching as to health of body, and the special purity of his sect, had all paved the way for what was afterwards a political development. There was no sudden change in doctrine as the Sikhs began to take up arms. Gobind Singh quite naturally grafted his praise

of the sword and his promises of rewards for valour on to the quietistic doctrines of Nānak. Singhs were forbidden to smite any one mercilessly, and never to attack without due cause. The defence of religion should always be the motive. The new names for God—All-steel, All-death, Great-steel, Great-death, and so on—were used in conjunction with the sacred word Wāhguru. The theology remained the same, with the following picturesque variation in the account of creation.

"God having just fashioned the Sword uttered a Word, from whence issued Brahma, Vishnu, Shiv."

The position of the Guru, also, assumed somewhat greater significance under the influence of Gobind Singh.

Summary of the Sikh Religion.—In Mr. Macauliffe's standard work on the Sikh religion, he gives the following comprehensive summary of its doctrine:

"It prohibits idolatry, hypocrisy, caste exclusiveness, the con-cremation of widows, the immurement of women, the use of wine and other intoxicants, tobacco-smoking, infanticide, slander, pilgrimages to the sacred rivers and tanks of the Hindus, and it inculcates loyalty, gratitude for all favours received, philanthropy, justice, impartiality, truth, honesty, and all the moral and domestic virtues known to the holiest citizens of any country."

Bhāi Gur Dās—a contemporary of Guru Arjan —made an analysis of the Sikh religion, which is interesting as showing how it impressed the people of the day. He points out the state of spiritual darkness at the time of Nānak, and continues :

"Sin prevailed throughout creation. God, observing men's anguish and hearing their piteous cries, conferred supernatural attributes on Guru Nānak. He bestowed on him the supreme wealth of the Name, and humility, and sent him into the world to relieve its sufferings. . . . Guru Nānak declared that God, who has no form or outline, was not found by wearing religious garbs, but by humility ; and that if men rejected caste and worshipped God in spirit, they should be accepted in His court. . . . Wherever the Guru planted his foot there was established a seat of worship. Every house of his followers became a temple in which the Lord's praises were ever sung, and the Lord's name continually repeated. . . . By practising humility the Guru's Sikhs are recognised. They live as hermits among their families, they efface their individuality, they pronounce the ineffable Name of God, and they transgress not the will of the Creator. . . . The Guru inculcated love and devotion, the repetition of God's Name, and the lesson that as men sow so shall they reap. Thus were men saved in every direction, and Guru Nānak became the true support of the nine regions of the earth."

CHAPTER IV

HYMNS FROM THE GRANTH SĀHIB, AND FROM THE GRANTH OF THE TENTH GURU

THE Granth Sāhib contains the hymns of the first five Gurus, of the ninth Guru, and a couplet of Gobind Singh; also hymns from certain Indian religious reformers previous to the Sikhs. There were originally three editions of the Granth Sāhib. The first was compiled by Guru Arjan, the second by Bhāi Banno, and the third under the auspices of the tenth Guru, who added the hymns of Teg Bahādur and a couplet of his own. This is the usually accepted form. The hymns are not arranged according to authors, but by the thirty-two "rāgs," or musical measures to which they are composed. The name Nānak is used as a *nom-de-guerre* by the eight succeeding Gurus, who, however, are distinguished from one another by numbers. The Granth Sāhib is compared to a vast building, and the compositions of the Gurus to various wards. Thus, Guru Nānak's hymns are known as Ward I, Guru Angad's as Ward II, and so forth.

The quotations given here include, firstly, selections from the hymns used as special services by the Sikhs, followed by miscellaneous examples from the Gurus, and the saints and reformers who preceded them.[1]

From the Japji

The Japji is considered by the Sikhs to be an epitome of the doctrines contained in the Granth Sāhib. It is silently repeated by them early in the morning. Every Sikh must know it by heart, otherwise he is not deemed orthodox. It is the duty of all, even if they cannot read, to have themselves taught this great morning divine service. The composition appears to have been the work of Guru Nānak in advanced age. The greater part is here given.

There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator, [the Powerful,[2]] devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent; by the favour of the Guru.

Repeat His name

The True One was in the beginning; the True One was in the primal age.

[1] Throughout the quotations the unusual spelling adopted by Mr. Macauliffe, e.g. Makka for Mecca, Quran for Koran, Veds for Vedas, Indar for Indra, Krishan for Krishna, etc., is followed.

[2] These words, though omitted by Mr. Macauliffe, are inserted in deference to Sikh opinion.

The True One is now also, O Nānak;[1] the True One also shall be.

I

By thinking I cannot obtain a conception *of Him*, even though I think hundreds of thousands of times.

Even though I be silent and keep my attention firmly fixed on Him, I cannot preserve silence.

The hunger of the hungry *for God* subsideth not, though they obtain the load of the worlds.

If man should have thousands and hundreds of thousands of devices, even one would not assist him in obtaining God.

How shall *man* become true before God? How shall the veil of falsehood be rent?

By walking, O Nānak, according to the will of the Commander as preordained.

II

By His orders bodies are produced; His order cannot be described.

By His order souls are infused into them; by His order greatness is obtained.

By His order men are high or low; by His order they obtain preordained pain or pleasure.

By His order some obtain their reward; by

[1] In Oriental poetry it is the custom to insert the name of the poet at the end of any section.

His order others must ever wander in transmigration.

All are subject to His order; none is exempt from it.

He who understandeth God's order, O Nānak, is never guilty of egotism.

III

Who can sing His power? Who hath power to *sing it*?

Who can sing His gifts or know His signs?

Who can sing His attributes, His greatness, and His deeds?

Who can sing His knowledge, whose study is arduous?

Who can sing Him, who fashioneth the body and *again* destroyeth it?

Who can sing Him, who taketh away life and again restoreth it?

Who can sing Him, who appeareth to be far, *but* is known *to be near*?

Who can sing Him, who is *all*-seeing and omnipresent?

In describing Him there would never be an end.

Millions of men give millions upon millions of descriptions of Him, *but they fail to describe Him.*

The Giver giveth; the receiver groweth weary of receiving.

In every age man subsisteth by His bounty.

The Commander by His order hath laid out the way *of the world.*

Nānak, God the unconcerned is happy.

.

V

He is not established, nor is He created.

The pure one existeth by Himself.

They who worshipped Him have obtained honour.

Nānak, sing His *praises* who is the Treasury of excellences.

Sing and hear and put His love into your hearts.

Thus shall your sorrows be removed, and you shall be absorbed in Him who is the abode of happiness.

Under the Guru's instruction *God's* word *is heard*; under the Guru's instruction its knowledge *is acquired*; under the Guru's instruction *man learns that God* is everywhere contained.

The Guru is Shiv; the Guru is Vishnu and Brahma;[1] the Guru is Pārbati,[2] Lakhshmi,[3] and Saraswati.[4]

[1] Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiv form the Hindu triad, and are generally speaking regarded as the gods of creation, preservation, and destruction.

[2] Consort of Shiv.

[3] The Hindu goddess of wealth, consort of Vishnu.

[4] The Hindu goddess of eloquence and learning.

If I knew Him, should I not describe Him ? He cannot be described by words.

My Guru hath explained one thing to me—

That there is *but* one Bestower on all living beings ; may I not forget Him !

VI

If I please Him, that is my place of pilgrimage to bathe in ; if I please Him not, what ablutions shall I make ?

What can all the created beings I behold obtain without *previous* good acts ?

Precious stones, jewels, and gems *shall be treasured up* in thy heart if thou hearken to even one word of the Guru.

The Guru hath explained one thing to me.

That there is *but* one Bestower on all living beings ; may I not forget Him !

VII

Were man to live through the four ages,[1] *yea* ten times longer ;

Were he to be known on the nine continents,[2] and were everybody to follow in his train ;

[1] The Sat, Tretā, Dwāpar, and Kal ages, corresponding to the golden, silver, brass, and iron ages of Greece and Rome.

[2] Ancient Indian geographers divided the world into nine regions, or continents.

Were he to obtain a great name and praise and renown in the world ;

If God's look of favour fell not on him, no one would notice him.

He would be accounted a worm among worms, and even sinners would impute sin to him.

Nānak, God may bestow virtue on those who are devoid of it, as well as on those who *already* possess it ;

But no such person is seen as can bestow virtue upon Him.

.

IX

By hearing *the Name* man becometh *as* Shiv, Brahma, and Indar.[1]

By hearing the Name *even* the low become highly lauded.

By hearing the Name the way of Jog [2] and the secrets of the body *are obtained.*

By hearing the Name man *understandeth the real nature* of the Shasters, the Simritis, and the Veds.[3]

Nānak, the saints are ever happy.

[1] Indar, an ancient Hindu Deity, King of the Gods. In the Vedas, Lord of the sky.

[2] Jog, originally meant the union of the soul of God. It is applied to certain practices adopted by ascetics (Jogis) for that end.

[3] Sacred books of the Hindus.

By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more.

X

By hearing the Name truth, contentment, and divine knowledge *are obtained.*

Hearing the Name is equal to bathing at the sixty-eight *places of pilgrimage.*

By hearing the Name and reading it man obtaineth honour.

By hearing the Name the mind is composed and fixed on God.

Nānak, the saints are ever happy.

By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more.

XI

By hearing the Name, the depth of the sea of virtue is sounded.

By hearing the Name *men become* Shaikhs, Pirs,[1] and Emperors.

By hearing the Name a blind man findeth his way.

By hearing the Name the unfathomable becometh fathomable.

Nānak, the saints are ever happy.

By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are no more.

[1] Muhammadan saints.

XII

The condition of him who obeyeth God cannot be described.

Whoever trieth to describe it, shall afterward repent.

There is no paper, pen, or writer

To describe *the condition* of him who obeyeth God.

So pure is His Name—

Whoever obeyeth God knoweth *the pleasure of it* in his own heart.

XIII

By obeying Him wisdom and understanding *enter* the mind;

By obeying Him man knoweth all worlds.

By obeying Him man suffereth not punishment.

By obeying Him man shall not depart with Jam.[1]

So pure is God's name,

Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart.

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XV

By obeying Him man attaineth the gate of salvation;

[1] Death.

By obeying Him man is saved with his family ;
By obeying Him the Guru is saved, and saveth his disciples ;
By obeying Him, O Nānak, man wandereth not in *quest* of alms—
So pure is God's name—
Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart.

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XX

When the hands, feet, and *other members of* the body are covered with filth,
It is removed by washing with water.
When thy clothes are polluted,
Apply soap, and the impurity shall be washed away.
So when the mind is defiled by sin,
It is cleansed by the love of the Name.
Men do not become saints or sinners by merely calling themselves so.
The recording angels take with them a record of *man's* acts.
It is he himself soweth, and he himself eateth.
Nānak, man suffereth transmigration by God's order.

XXI

Pilgrimage, austerities, mercy, and almsgiving on general and special occasions

Whosoever performeth, *may obtain* some little honour;

But he who heareth and obeyeth and loveth *God* in his heart,

Shall wash off his *impurity* in the place of pilgrimage within him.

All virtues are thine, O Lord; none are mine.

There is no devotion without virtue.

From the Self-existent *proceeded* Māya,[1] whence issued a word which produced Brahma and the rest—

'Thou art true, Thou art beautiful, there is ever pleasure in Thy heart!'

What the time, what the epoch, what the lunar day, and what the week-day,

What the season, and what the month when the world was created,

The Pandits [2] did not discover; had they done so, they would have recorded it in the Purans.[3]

Nor did the Qazis [4] discover it; had they done so, they would have recorded it in the Quran:

Neither the Jogi, nor any other *mortal*, knows the lunar day, or the week-day, or the season, or the month.

Only the Creator who fashioned the world knoweth *when He did so.*

[1] Māya, illusion.

[2] Pandit means literally a learned man. Here Brahmans learned in Sanscrit.

[3] Sacred books of the Hindus, of which there are fourteen in number.

[4] Muhammadan saints.

How shall I address Thee, O God ? how shall I praise Thee ? how shall I describe Thee ? and how shall I know Thee ?

Saith Nānak, everybody speaketh of Thee, one wiser than another.

Great is the Lord, great is His name : what He doeth cometh to pass.

Nānak, he who is proud shall not be honoured on his arrival in the next world.

XXII

There are hundreds of thousands of nether and upper regions.

Men have grown weary at last of searching *for God's* limits ; the Veds say one thing, *that God has no limit.*

The thousands of Purans and Muhammadan books tell that in reality there is but one principle.

If God can be described by writing, then describe Him ; *but* such description is impossible.

O Nānak, call Him great ; only He Himself knoweth how great He is.

XXIII

Praisers praise God, but have not acquired a knowledge of Him.

As rivers and streams fall into the sea, but know not *its extent.*

Kings and emperors who possess oceans and mountains of property and wealth,

Are not equal to the worm which forgetteth not God in its heart.

.

XXVII

(THE SIKH TE DEUM)

What is that gate, what is that mansion where Thou, *O God*, sittest and watchest over all things ?

How many various and countless instruments are played ! How many musicians,

How many musical measures with their consorts,[1] and how many singers sing Thee !

Wind, water, and fire sing Thee ; Dharmrāj [2] sings at Thy gate.

The recording angels, who know how to write, and on whose record Dharmrāj judgeth, sing Thee.

Ishar,[3] Brahma, and Devi,[4] ever beautiful and adored *by Thee*, sing Thee.

Indar, seated on his throne with the gods at Thy gate, sing Thee.

Sidhs [5] in meditation sing Thee ; holy men in contemplation sing Thee.

The continent, the true, and the patient sing Thee ; unyielding heroes sing Thee.

The Pandits and the supreme Rikhis,[6] reading their Veds, sing Thee in every age.

[1] Indian musical measures (or rāgs) were allotted wives and daughters, i.e. variations of these tunes.
[2] God of death.
[3] A name of Shiv.
[4] A Hindu goddess.
[5] An ancient order of Jogis.
[6] Ancient sages.

The lovely *celestial maids* who beguile the heart in the upper, middle, and nether regions sing Thee.

The jewels created by Thee with the sixty-eight places of *Hindu* pilgrimage sing Thee.

Mighty warriors and divine heroes sing Thee; the four sources of life sing Thee.

The continents, the worlds, and the universe made and supported by Thy hands sing Thee.

The saints who please Thee, and who are imbued with Thy love sing Thee.

The many others who sing Thee I cannot remember; how could Nānak recount them?

That God is ever true, He is the true Lord, and the true Name.

He who made this world is and shall be; He shall neither depart, nor be made to depart.

He who created things of different colours, descriptions, and species,

Beholdeth His handiwork which attesteth His greatness.

He will do what pleaseth Himself; no order may be issued to Him.

He is King, the King of kings, O Nānak; *all* remain *subject to* his will.

.

XXIX

Make divine knowledge thy food, compassion thy store-keeper, and the voice which is in every heart the pipe *to call to repast.*

Make Him who hath strung the whole world *on His string* thy spiritual Lord ; let wealth and supernatural power be relishes for others.

Union and separation is the law which regulateth the world. By destiny we receive our portion.

HAIL ! HAIL TO HIM,

The primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age !

XXX

One Māya in union *with* God gave birth to three acceptable children.

One of them is the creator, the second the provider, the third performeth the function of destroyer.[1]

As it pleaseth God, He directeth them by His orders.

He beholdeth them, but is not seen by them. This is very marvellous.

HAIL ! HAIL TO HIM,

The primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age !

XXXI

His seat and His storehouses are in every world.

[1] The Hindu Trinity.

What was to be put into them was put in at one time.

The Creator beholdeth His creation.

Nānak, true is the work of the True One.

HAIL! HAIL TO HIM,

The primal, the pure, without beginning, the indestructible, the same in every age!

XXXII

Were one tongue to become a hundred thousand, and a hundred thousand to become twenty-fold more,

I would utter the name of the one Lord of the world hundreds of thousands of times *with all my tongues.*

In this way I should ascend the stairs of the Lord, and become one with Him.

On hearing of the exaltation of the religious, the vile become jealous.

Nānak, *the former* have found the Kind One, while false is the boasting of the false.

.

FROM THE ASA KI WĀR[1]

(Repeated by Sikhs in the morning.)

There is but one God whose name is true, the

[1] The word *Wār* originally meant a dirge for the brave slain in battle; then it meant any song of praise; and in this collection it means God's praises generally.

Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great and beneficent.

.

Guru Angad

Were a hundred moons to rise, and a thousand suns to mount *the sky*;
Even with such light there would be appalling darkness without the Guru.

Guru Nānak

Nānak, they who very clever in their own estimation think not of the Guru,
Shall be left like spurious sesames in a reaped field.
They shall be left in the field, saith Nānak, without an owner:
The wretches may even bear fruit and flower, but they shall be as ashes within their bodies.

.

Men, trees, the banks of sacred streams, clouds, fields,
Islands, peoples, countries, continents, the universe,
Lakes, mountains, animals—O Nānak, God knoweth their condition.

Nānak, God having created animals taketh care of them all.

The Creator who created the world hath to take thought for it also.

It is the same Creator who made the world who taketh thought for it.

To Him be obeisance ; blessings be on Him ! His court is imperishable.

Nānak, without the true Name what is a sacrificial mark ? what a sacrificial thread ?

Guru Angad

The Jogis deem it their duty to acquire divine knowledge, the Brahmans to read the Veds,

The Khatris *to exercise* bravery, the Sudars to work for others ;

But the highest duty of all is to repeat the name of the one God.

He who knoweth the secret of this

Is a bright God himself, and Nānak is his slave.

Guru Angad

There is one God, the God of all gods, the Supreme God of souls.

He who knoweth the secrets of the soul and of God,

Is a bright God himself, and Nānak is his slave.

.

Guru Angad

He who offereth salutation and *at the same time* criticiseth *God's works*, hath made a mistake from the beginning.

Both *his salutation and criticism* are in vain; Nānak, such a person shall not obtain a place in *God's court.*

Guru Nānak

Ever remember that Lord by worshipping whom thou shalt find happiness.

Why hast thou done such evil deeds as thou shalt suffer for?

Do absolutely nothing evil, look well before thee;

So throw the dice that thou mayest not lose with the Lord,

Nay, that thou mayest gain some profit.

.

The greatness of the great God cannot be expressed;

He is the Creator, the Omnipotent, the Bounteous; He provideth His creatures with sustenance.

Man must do the work which God destined for him from the beginning.

Nānak, except in the one God alone there is no *abiding* place.

He doeth what He pleaseth.

From the Rahirās [1]

(Recited by Sikhs at sunset.)

Guru Rām Dās

O servants of God and the true Guru, the true Being, offer this supplication unto Him,

We insects and worms seek Thy protection, O true Guru; mercifully enlighten us with the Name;

My friend and divine Guru, enlighten me with God's name.

Under the Guru's instruction, the Name is the helper of my soul; singing God's praises is my occupation.

Exceedingly fortunate are the men of God who have faith in Him and thirst for Him:

On obtaining the name of God, they are satisfied; when men meet the company of the saints, God's attributes are known.

They who obtain not the relish of God's name are unfortunate, and shall go to the god of death.

Curses on the lives, curses on the hopes of living, of those who enter not the true Guru's protection and society!

The saints who have obtained the society of

[1] The Rahirās is a collection of hymns by several Gurus.

the true Guru are those on whose foreheads it was so written from the beginning.

Blest is that true society, Nānak, by meeting which the relish of God is obtained, and the Name manifested.

Guru Arjan

O my soul, why proposeth thou exertion when God Himself is engaged in effort for thee ?

He even putteth their food before the insects which He created in rocks and stones.

O my God, they who meet the society of the saints are saved.

Through the favour of the Guru they obtain the highest rank ; though they be as dry wood, they are made green.

No one can rely on mother, father, friends, children, or wives.

God provideth every one with his daily food ; why, O man, art thou afraid ?

The *kulang* flieth away hundreds of miles, leaving her young behind her.

Who feedeth them ? Who giveth them *morsels* to peck at ? Have you not considered this ?

God holdeth in the palm of His hand all treasures and the eighteen supernatural powers.

Nānak is ever a sacrifice unto thee ; O God, Thou hast no end or bounds.

Guru Rām Dās

That Being is pure, God is the pure Being, God is altogether inaccessible and illimitable.

All meditate on Thee; all meditate on Thee; O God, Thou art the true Creator.

All creatures are Thine; Thou providest for them all.

O saints, meditate on God who causeth all misery to be forgotten.

God Himself is the Lord, God Himself is the worshipper; Nānak, what a helpless creature is man!

Thou, O God, the one Supreme Being, art fully contained in every heart and pervadest everything.

Some men are givers, some beggars; all are Thy wondrous sport.

Thou Thyself art the Giver; Thou art the Enjoyer; I know none beside Thee.

Thou art the totally infinite Supreme Being; what attributes of Thine shall I recount?

The slave Nānak is a sacrifice unto those who serve Thee, unto those who serve Thee.

They who meditate on Thee, who meditate on Thee, O God, abide in happiness in this age.

They who meditate on God are emancipated, are emancipated, my friend; for them Death's noose is broken.

All fear hath departed from those who have meditated on the fearless, the fearless God.

They who have worshipped, who have worshipped my God, are absorbed in Him.

Blest, blest are they who have meditated on God; the slave Nānak will become a sacrifice unto them.

O Infinite One, Thine infinite storehouses are filled with Thy worship, Thy worship.

O Infinite One, many are Thy saints, many are Thy saints who praise Thee.

They offer various, various worship to Thee, O God; they practise austerities and repeat Thy name, O endless One.

Various, various *saints* of Thine read many Simritis and Shastars, perform their daily duties and the six acts *prescribed for Brahmans*;

But only they are saints, good saints, saith Nānak, who please God, the Omnipotent.

Thou art the primal Being, the illimitable Creator; there is none so great as Thou.

Thou art the same in every age; Thou art ever and ever the same; Thou art the eternal Creator.

What pleaseth Thee prevaileth; what Thou doest cometh to pass.

Thou Thyself didst fashion the whole creation, yet, being created, it shall disappear.

Nānak singeth the praises of the Creator who knoweth all things.

From the Sohila [1]

(Repeated at bedtime by pious Sikhs.)

Guru Nānak

In the house in which God's praise is sung and He is meditated on,

Sing the Sohila and remember the Creator.

Sing the Sohila of my Fearless Lord; I am a sacrifice to that song of joy by which everlasting comfort is obtained.

Ever and ever living things are watched over; the Giver regardeth *their wants.*

When *even* Thy gifts cannot be appraised, who can appraise the Giver?

The year and the auspicious time *for marriage* are recorded; *relations* meet and pour oil on me the bride.

O my friends, pray for me that I may meet my Lord.

This message is ever sent to every house: such invitations are ever issued.

Remember the Caller; Nānak, the day is approaching.

Guru Nānak

There are six schools of *philosophy,* six teachers, and six doctrines.

[1] The word is derived from *sowan wela*—in Punjābi, 'the time for sleep.'

The Guru of gurus is but one, though He hath various forms.

O father, preserve the system
In which the Creator is praised ; that will redound to thy glory.

As there is one sun and many seasons,
So, O Nānak, there is but one God, although His forms are many.

Guru Nānak

The sun and moon, *O Lord*, are Thy lamps ; the firmament Thy salver ; the orbs of the stars the pearls *enchased* in it.

The perfume of the sandal is Thine incense, the wind is Thy fan, all the forests are Thy flowers, O Lord of light.

What worship is this, O Thou Destroyer of birth ? Unbeaten strains of ecstasy are the trumpets of Thy worship.

Thou hast a thousand eyes and yet not one eye ; Thou hast a thousand forms and yet not one form ;

Thou hast a thousand stainless feet and yet not one foot ; Thou hast a thousand organs of smell and yet not one organ. I am fascinated by this play of Thine.

The light which is in everything is Thine, O Lord of light.

From its brilliancy everything is brilliant ;

By the Guru's teaching the light becometh manifest.

What pleaseth Thee is the *real* worship.

O God, my mind is fascinated with thy lotus feet as the bumble-bee with the flower: night and day I thirst for them.

Give the water of Thy favour to the sārang[1] Nānak, so that he may dwell in Thy name.

Guru Rām Dās

The city[2] is greatly filled with lust and wrath; but these are destroyed on meeting the saints.

By predestination the Guru is found, and the soul is absorbed in the region of God's love.

Salute the saint with clasped hands—this is a greatly meritorious act.

Prostrate thyself before him—this is a greatly religious act.

The infidel knoweth not the taste of God's essence; he beareth the thorn of pride in his heart.

The more he moveth, the more it pricketh him, and the more pain he feeleth: his head shall feel death's mace.

The saints of God are absorbed in God's name, and have destroyed the pain and fear of transmigration.

[1] The pied Indian cuckoo, a bird famous in Indian literature.

[2] The body.

They have found God the imperishable Being, and great honour is theirs in the earth's continents and the universe.

O God, we poor, and wretched, are Thine; preserve us, preserve us, Thou greatest of the great!

The Name is Nānak's support and prop; I have obtained happiness through being absorbed only in God's name.

Guru Arjan

I pray you hear me, my friends, it is time to serve the saints.

Earn here the profit of God's name, and in the next world ye shall abide in happiness.

Human life groweth shorter every day and night;

O man, meet the Guru and arrange thine affairs.

This world is involved in wickedness and superstition; they who know God are saved.

He whom God awakeneth and causeth to drink the essence *of His word*, knoweth the story of the Ineffable.

Purchase that for which thou hast come into the world, and God by the Guru's favour will dwell in thy heart.

Thou shalt find a home with comfort and peace in God's own palace, and not return again to this world.

O God, Searcher of hearts, Arranger, fulfil the desires of my heart.

The slave Nānak craveth the happiness of being made the dust of the saints' feet.

The following hymns, by various Gurus, are not found in any of the special services.

Hymns by Guru Nānak

As a herdsman guardeth and keepeth watch over his cattle,

So God day and night cherisheth and guardeth man and keepeth him in happiness.

O Thou compassionate to the poor, I seek Thy protection; look on me with favour.

Preserve me in this world and the next.

Wherever I look there art Thou contained; guard me, O Guardian.

Thou art the Giver, Thou art the Enjoyer, Thou art the support of the soul.

Come, my Friend, that I may behold Thee.

Standing at my door I am watching for Thee; in my heart is excessive longing;

In my heart is excessive longing; hear me, my Lord, I have reliance on Thee.

On beholding Thee I have become free from desire; the pain of birth and death is at an end.

In all things is Thy light; from it art Thou known, but Thou art found by love.
Nānak, I am a sacrifice to the Friend; the True One is found *when my mind* cometh home.

The priests, the Shaikhs, and the potentates of the world are all beneath the earth.
Emperors pass away, but God ever flourisheth.
There is only Thou, there is only Thou, O God!

Neither demigods, nor demons, nor men,
Nor Sidhs, nor Strivers, nor this earth *shall abide.*
There is One; is there any other?
There is only Thou, there is only Thou, O God!
Neither the just nor the generous,
Nor the seven regions beneath the earth *shall remain.*
There is One: is there any other?
There is only Thou, there is only Thou, O God!

Not the regions of the sun and the moon,
Nor the seven continents, nor the seven seas,
Nor corn, nor wind shall abide.
There is only Thou, there is only Thou, O God!

Our maintenance is in nobody's power *but God's*:
To *all* of us but one hope abideth—
There is One: is there any other?
There is only Thou, there is only Thou, O God!

Nānak, no one can erase
What is written on the forehead.
God it is who giveth man power and again taketh it away.
There is only Thou, there is only Thou, O God!

God's palace is beautiful; it is *adorned* with bright gems, rubies,
Pearls, and diamonds; *it is surrounded by* a golden fortress, and is an abode of pleasure.
How shall I scale the fortress without a ladder? By meditating on God *through the* Guru I shall behold Him.
The Guru *giving me* God's name is my ladder, my boat, and my raft;
The Guru is the lake, the sea, and the boat; the Guru is the sacred stream.

By Guru Angad

(Upon the completion of Guru Angad's new alphabet he composed the following hymn:)

O Thou who art perfect, light of the soul, the Supreme God, my beloved, my soul and body,
Bewitcher, Thou hast bewitched my heart; I have obtained understanding by pondering on Thy Word.
I am the handmaiden of my Lord.
On clasping the feet of God, the life of the world, I have destroyed and parted with pride.

I was perverse and low, but my evil understanding which hath caused me pain of mind and body hath left me.

Since I began to love the joyous God, my mind hath been consoled by repeating His name.

Having forgotten pride, I have abandoned the world, and true wisdom hath entered my heart.

Since I have become reconciled with Him who is without enmity or stain, I have lost all regard for men's opinion.

O my Beloved, Support of my soul, there has been none like Thee in the past, and there shall be none like Thee in the future.

Nānak, she who is dyed with Thy name is a happy wife ; Thy name is my refuge.

By Guru Amar Dās

(The Guru points out that salvation can be found in the home with the help of the true Guru.)

I wandered through the whole world calling out for my Beloved, yet my thirst departed not ;

But on meeting the true Guru, O Nānak, my thirst departed, and I found my beloved in my own home on my return.

By Guru Rām Dās

Nānak, the pious are adorned by the Word, and night and day sing God's praises.

God acteth Himself and causeth to act; He adorneth men by His word.

He Himself is the True Guru; He is the Word; in every age His saints are dear to Him.

In every age His saints are dear to Him; He Himself adorneth them; He Himself appointeth them to His service.

He Himself is far-seeing. He Himself causeth men to serve Him.

He Himself is the Bestower of merits and the remover of demerits; He causeth His name to dwell in men's hearts.

Nānak is ever a sacrifice unto that True One who Himself acteth and causeth to act.

By Guru Arjan [1]

He Himself instructeth, and He Himself understandeth;
He Himself is blended with everything;
He made His own expansion;
Everything is His, He is the Creator.
Say can anything be effected without Him?
The One God is in every place;
He Himself acteth His own parts;
He exhibiteth plays of endless parts;
He is in the soul, and the soul is in Him;
Nānak, His worth cannot be described.

[1] Guru Arjan was the compiler of the Granth Sāhib. He wrote a great number of hymns himself and more than half the sacred volume is made up of his own compositions.

True, true, true is the Lord God ;
By the Guru's favour some rare person describeth Him.
True, true, true is He who created all.
Among millions some rare one knoweth Thee, *O God* ;
Excellent, excellent, excellent is Thy form,
Very beautiful, unbounded, and incomparable.
Pure, pure, pure is Thy word ;
Every one heareth it with his ears, and repeateth it.
Holy, holy, holy, holy
Is Thy name ; Nānak uttereth it with heartfelt love.

Prayer by Guru Arjan

O Lord, King of men, Friend of the poor, Purifier of sinners,
Dispeller of fear and terror, Abode of mercy, Treasury of excellencies, profitable is Thy service.
O God Gopal, great Gobind,
I have taken the protection of Thy feet, Thou merciful God, cause me to cross the terrible ocean of the world.
Dispeller of lust and wrath, Burner of pride and worldly love, Murari, Honey of the soul,
Sustainer of the earth, set aside my transmigration and preserve mine honour, Thou Primal Joy.

O compassionate to the poor, ever happy, who fillest all space, I beg the dust of Thy saints' feet.

From the evils of worldly and sensual love, and from the sins of hope and desire *preserve us.*

Preserve the faith and remove doubt from our hearts; save us, O Formless One!

Hymns by Guru Teg Bahādur

The sixth, seventh, and eighth Gurus left no hymns, but relied on the Granth Sāhib for the means of conveying their instructions. Teg Bahādur, the ninth Guru, however, left a large number of sacred writings, which were incorporated into the Granth Sāhib by his son Gobind Singh. The following is typical of his rather melancholy manner:

Adore God, adore God; thy life passeth away.

Why should I warn thee every moment? why understandest thou not, O fool? The body is like hail, it vanisheth in a moment.

Reject all doubt and repeat God's name; at the last moment this alone will depart with thee.

Forsake sensual pleasures as poison; take the praise of God to thy heart; Nānak proclaimeth, the opportunity is passing away.

O man, love God;

Hear His praises with thine ears, and sing His songs with thy tongue.

Associate with holy men, remember God, and thou shalt be cleansed from sin.

Death wandereth about, O friend, like a serpent with protruding fangs.

And it will seize thee sooner or later; understand this in thy heart,

Saith Nānak, worship God; thine opportunity is passing away.

By Guru Gobind Singh

This couplet is the only composition of the tenth Guru found in the Granth Sāhib, and was sent by Gobind Singh to his father just before the martyrdom of the latter:

Strength is thine; thy fetters are loosed; thou hast every resource.

Nānak, everything is in thy power; it is only thou who canst assist thyself.

There are in the Granth Sāhib a large number of hymns by saints and hermits who preceded Nānak. Guru Arjan, when editing the volume, did not hesitate to include such works, showing how Sikhism had borrowed from previous thinkers, principally, perhaps, from Kabīr. Among the authors who are represented there are at least two Muhammadan saints, Farid and Bhikan, and very many of the others, though nominally Hindu, were influenced by Muhammadanism. Kabīr,

who was brought up by Muhammadans, contributes a large number of hymns; Rāmānand, a disciple of Rāmānuj and Guru to Kabīr, contributes a hymn; and one version of the Granth, preserved at Mangat, contains a hymn composed by Mirā Bāi, Queen of Chitaur. Guru Arjan did not originally include this work, owing to the fact that in his opinion the lady did not wholly escape from the influence of idolatry.

From the fifteen saints whose hymns are found in the Granth, the following extracts from Kabīr and Shaikh Farid are chosen. Mirā Bāi's hymn is also included.

By Kabīr

Long not for a dwelling in heaven, and fear not to dwell in hell;

What will be, will be; O my soul, hope not at all.

Sing the praises of God from whom the supreme reward is obtained.

What is devotion, what penance and austerities, what fasting and ablutions,

Unless thou know the way to love and serve God?

Be not glad at the sight of prosperity and grieve not at the sight of adversity;

As is prosperity so is adversity; what God proposeth shall be accomplished.

Saith Kabīr, through the saints I now know in my heart
That the worshipper in whose heart God dwelleth, *performeth* the best worship.

.

I was in immobile and mobile creatures, in worms and in moths;
I passed through many births of various kinds.
In this way I occupied many bodies,
But when, O God, I assumed *human* birth,
I was a Jogi, a Jati, a penitent, a Brahmachari,
Sometimes a king, an emperor, and sometimes a beggar.
The apostates shall die, but the saints shall all live,
And drink the elixir of God with their tongues.
Saith Kabīr, O God, have mercy on us;
We have grown weary; make us now whole!

By Shaikh Farid

Humility is the word, forbearance the virtue, civility the priceless spell;
Make these three thy dress, O sister, and the Spouse shall come into thy power.
There are few saints,
Who, though wise, are simple,
Though strong, are weak,

And, though having not, divide what they have.

Utter not one disagreeable word, since the true Lord is in all men.

Distress no one's heart; every heart is a priceless jewel.

All men's hearts are jewels; to distress them is by no means good;

If thou desire the Beloved, distress no one's heart.

Hymn by Mirā Bāi

God hath entwined my soul, O mother,

With His attributes, and I have sung of them.

The sharp arrow of His love hath pierced my body through and through, O mother.

When it struck me I knew it not; now it cannot be endured, O mother.

Though I use charms, incantations, and drugs, the pain will not depart.

Is there any one who will treat me? Intense is the agony, O mother.

Thou, O God, art near; Thou art not distant; come quickly to meet me.

Saith Mirā, the Lord, the mountain-wielder, who is compassionate, hath quenched the fire of my body, O mother.

The Lotus-eyed hath entwined *my soul* with the twine of His attributes.

FROM THE GRANTH OF THE TENTH GURU

After the death of Gobind Singh—the tenth Guru—a new Granth was compiled in his honour, which is known as the *Granth of the Tenth Guru*, in order to distinguish it from the Granth of Guru Arjan—the *Adi*, or First Granth. This volume contains Gobind Singh's *Jāpji*, the *Akal Ustat*, or Praise of the Creator, hymns in praise of the sword, and an interesting and elaborate account of the Guru's own history and that of his predecessors, which is called the *Wonderful Drama*.

FROM THE JĀPJI [1]

The tenth Guru spoke with his holy mouth—

God hath no quoit or marks, no colour, no caste, no lineage,

No form, no complexion, no outline, no costume, none can in any way describe Him.

He is immovable, fearless, luminous, and measureless in might;

He is accounted King of kings, Lord of millions of Indars.

He is Sovereign of the three worlds, demigods,

[1] Guru Gobind Singh's *Jāpji* was composed in order to supply the Sikhs with an equivalent to the Hindu *Vishnu Sahasar Nām*—Vishnu's thousand names. It is held by them in the same estimation as the Japji of Guru Nānak.

men, and demons ; the woods and dales declare Him indescribable.

O Lord, who can tell all Thy names ? the wise call Thee *special* names according to Thy deeds.

From the Akal Ustat

(Praise of the Immortal)

May we have the protection of the immortal Being !

May we have the protection of All-steel !

May we have the protection of All-death !

May we have the protection of All-steel !

(Ten Sawaiyas, or quatrains, which occur in the Akal Ustat are recited at the Pahul, or baptism of the tenth Guru. The following are extracts :)

Trained soldiers, powerful, irresistible, well accoutred with coats of mail crush their enemies ;

Filled with high martial spirit they would put mountains to flight, themselves unshaken ;

They would shatter their enemies, destroy rebels, crush the pride of furious elephants ;

Yet without the favour of God, the Lord of wealth, they should all depart at last and leave the world.

Even the demons, gods, serpents, and ghosts who repeat God's name in the past, future, and present ;

All the beings which in sea and land every moment set up God in their hearts,

Shall find their good deeds and glory increase; they shall hear the voices of gratulation and the multitude of their sins shall depart.

The congregations of saints wander happy in the world; all their enemies on beholding them are cowed.

Thou art in the tree, Thou art in its leaves,
Thou art in the earth, Thou art in the firmament.
Thy name is repeated again and again, Thy name is fixed in man's heart.
Thou art space, Thou art time,
Thou art the occupant, Thou art the place,
Thou art unborn, Thou art fearless,
Thou art impalpable, Thou art indestructible,
Thou art continence, Thou art fasting,
Thou art deliverance, Thou art wisdom,
Thou alone art, Thou alone art.

The dwellers of the East know not Thy limit, the goddess Hingula [1] who dwelleth in the Himalayas meditateth on Thee.

The Jogis practise Jog to be united with Thee; how many suspend their breath *to obtain Thee*. The Arabs of Arabia worship Thy name.

The Firangis of France worship Thee, . . . the

[1] Hingula is another of the names of Pārbati or Durga, consort of Shiv.

residents of the West recognise Thee as the object of their love.

The Marathas, the Magadhis [1] heartily do Thee penance, the natives of Tilang [2] fix Thee in their hearts, and recognise Thee as the abode of religion.

(The following hymn is one of those recited while the baptismal water is being prepared :)

O man, practise asceticism in this way :

Consider thy house altogether as the forest, and remain an anchoret at heart.

Make continence thy matted hair, union with God thine ablutions, thy daily religious duties the growth of thy nails,

Divine knowledge thy spiritual guide ; admonish thy heart and apply God's name as ashes to thy body.

Eat little, sleep little, love mercy and forbearance.

Ever practise mildness and patience, and thou shalt be freed from the three qualities.

Attach not to thy heart lust, wrath, covetousness, obstinacy, and worldly love.

Thus shalt thou behold the Real Soul of this world, and obtain the Supreme Being.

God hath no disease, or sorrow, or worldly love, or mother, no Karma, no superstition, no birth, no caste ;

[1] Natives of the country of Magadha, now South Bihar.

[2] The Telegu country, on the east coast of India, between Orissa and Madras.

He hath no jealousy, no garb, and is unborn.
I bow to Him as one ! I bow to Him as one !

.

He hath no worldly love, no home, no grief, no relation.
He is afar off, pure, undefiled, none can behold Him.
He hath no caste, no language, no friend, no minister.
I bow to the one independent Being ! I bow to the one independent Being !

(In view of the controversy as to whether or not the Sikhs are a sect of the Hindus, the following quotation is also interesting :)

I practise not fasting, nor observe the Ramzām ;
I serve Him who will preserve me at the last hour.
The one Lord of the earth is my God.
Who judgeth both Hindus and Musalmans.
I neither go on a pilgrimage to Makka, nor worship at Hindu places of pilgrimages.
I serve the one God and none other.
I neither *worship as the Hindus*, nor pray as the Musalmans.
I take the formless God into my heart, and there make obeisance unto Him.
I am neither a Hindu nor a Musalman.

In Praise of the Sword

I bow with love and devotion to the Holy Sword.
Assist me that I may complete this work.

Thou art the Subduer of countries, the Destroyer of the armies of the wicked, in the battle-field Thou greatly adornest the brave.

Thine arm is infrangible, Thy brightness refulgent, Thy radiance and splendour dazzle like the sun.

Thou bestowest happiness on the good, Thou terrifiest the evil, Thou scatterest sinners, I seek Thy protection.

Hail! hail to the Creator of the world, the Saviour of creation, my Cherisher, hail to Thee, O Sword!

I bow to Him who holdeth the arrow in His hand; I bow to the Fearless One;

I bow to the God of gods who is in the present and the future.

I bow to the Scimitar, the two-edged Sword, the Falchion, and the Dagger.

Thou, O God, hast ever one form; Thou art ever unchangeable.

I bow to the Holder of the mace
Who diffused light through the fourteen worlds.
I bow to the Arrow and the Musket,

I bow to the Sword, spotless, fearless, and unbreakable;
I bow to the powerful Mace and Lance
To which nothing is equal.
I bow to Him who holdeth the discus,
Who is not made of the elements and who is terrible.
I bow to the Arrow and the Cannon
Which destroy the enemy.
I bow to the Sword and the Rapier
Which destroy the evil.
I bow to all weapons called Shastar (which may be held).
I bow to all weapons called Astar (which may be hurled or discharged).

It is not by the practice of perpetual silence, nor by the relinquishment of pride, nor by the adoption of a religious dress, nor by shaving the head,
Nor by wearing a wooden necklace, nor by twisting matted hair round the head that God is found.
I speak the truth, hear it attentively—without entering the protection of the Compassionate to the poor
And loving Him can God be found? the Merciful One is not pleased with circumcision.

Were I to make all the islands my paper, and the seven seas my ink;

Were I to cut down all trees, and turn them into pens for writing;

Were I to make Saraswati [1] dictate for millions of ages; were I to write with the hand of Ganesh,[2]

O Thou who holdest the destroying sword, I could not please Thee even a little without offering Thee homage.

Thou turnest men like me from blades of grass into mountains; than Thou there is none other cherisher of the poor.

O God, do Thou Thyself pardon mine errors; there is none who hath erred like me.

The houses of those who have served Thee are all seen filled with wealth.

In this Kal age and at all times there is great confidence in the powerful arm of the Sword,

Which in one moment destroyeth millions of demons like Sumbh and Nisumbh.[3]

They who never sought shelter in the battle-field and who retreated not even two paces when blows were dealt around them,

The demons who could not be drowned in the sea, and who could not be burnt by fiery arrows,

On beholding thy flash, O Sword, cast aside shame and fled.

[1] Goddess of eloquence and learning.
[2] The elephant-headed god of learning.
[3] Hindu names of demons.

FROM THE WONDERFUL DRAMA

He (Nānak) established religion in the Kal age,
And showed the way unto all holy men. . . .
[The narrative continues:]
Nānak assumed the body of Angad,
And made his religion current in the world.
Afterwards *Nānak* was called Amar Dās,
As one lamp is lit from another.
When the time for the fulfilment of the blessing came,
Then Rām Dās became Guru.
Amar Dās gave him the Guruship according to the ancient blessing,
And took the road to paradise himself.
The holy Nānak was revered as Angad,
Angad was recognised as Amar Dās,
And Amar Dās became Rām Dās.
The pious saw this, but not the fools,
Who thought them all distinct;
But some rare person recognised that they were all one.
They who understood this obtained perfection—
Without understanding perfection cannot be obtained.
When Rām Dās was blended with God,
He gave the Guruship to Arjan.
When Arjan was going to God's city
He appointed Har Gobind in his place.
When Har Gobind was going to God's city,

He seated Har Rāi in his place.
Har Krishan, his son, afterwards became Guru.
After him came Teg Bahādur,
Who protected the frontal marks and sacrificial threads *of the Hindus*,
And displayed great bravery in the Kal age.
When he put an end to his life for the sake of holy men,
He gave his head but uttered not a groan.
He suffered martyrdom for the sake of his religion ;
He gave his head but swerved not from his determination.
I shall now tell my own history,
How God brought me into the world as I was performing penance
On the mountain of Hem Kunt,
There I performed very great austerities
And worshipped Great-death.
I performed such penance
That I became blended with God.
When God gave me the order,
I assumed birth in this Kal age.
I did not desire to come,
As my attention was fixed on God's feet.
God remonstrated earnestly with me,
And sent me into this world with the following orders . . .

[God then tells the Guru how He had created the demi-gods and the various prophets, but how

they had all been false to their religion, and had attracted glory to themselves.]

"None of them recognised Me, the Supreme Being.
I have cherished thee as My son,
And created thee to extend My religion.
Go and spread My religion there,
And restrain the world from senseless acts."
I stood up, clasped my hands, bowed my head, and replied:
"Thy religion shall prevail in the world when Thou vouchsafest assistance."

On this account God sent me.
Then I took birth and came into the world.
As He spoke to me so I speak unto men:
I bear no enmity to any one.
All who call me the Supreme Being
Shall fall into the pit of hell.
Recognise me as God's servant only:
Have no doubt whatever of this.
I am the slave of the Supreme Being,
And have come to behold the wonders of the world.
I tell the world what God told me,
And will not remain silent through fear of mortals.
[The Guru then continues his teaching and finally utters this prayer:]

Great-death, be Thou my protector;
All-steel, I am Thy slave.
Deeming me Thine own, preserve me;
Think of mine honour, whose arm Thou hast taken.
Preserve me and let none trample on me;
Be Thou ever my cherisher!
Thou art the Lord, I am Thy slave.
Deeming me Thine own, be gracious unto me;
Perform everything for me Thyself;
Thou art the King of kings;
It is Thou alone who cherisheth the poor;
I have arrived and am lying weary at Thy door.
Thou art my Lord, I am Thy slave.
Deeming me Thy slave, reach me Thy hand and save me;
Destroy all mine enemies.

[The following words were uttered in Persian by Gobind Singh just before his death, and were adopted byRanjit Singh for his coinage when he became Maharajah:]

Gobind Singh obtained from Guru Nānak
Hospitality, the sword, victory, and prompt assistance.

A Modern Sikh Prayer

After the completion of the morning andevening obligatory divine services, and of the uninterrupted reading or chanting of the Granth Sāhib the Sikhs repeat a prayer or supplication called Ardas:

SRI WĀHGURU JI KI FATAH!

Having first remembered the Sword meditate on Guru Nānak;

Then on Guru Angad, Amar Dās, and Rām Dās; may they assist us!

Remember Arjan, Har Gobind, and the holy Hari Rai;

Meditate on the holy Hari Krishan, a sight of whom dispelled all sorrow.

Remember Teg Bahādur, and the nine treasures shall come hastening to your homes.

Ye holy Gurus, everywhere assist us.

May the tenth king, the holy Guru Gobind Singh, everywhere assist us.

God Himself knoweth, He Himself acteth; it is He who adjusteth.

Standing in His presence, Nānak, make supplication.

Sikhs of the true Immortal God, turn your thoughts to the teachings of the Granth Sāhib and the deeds of the Khalsa; utter Wāhguru!

Meditating on the Deathless One, endowed with all power, compassionate, and just, utter Wāhguru!

Meditating on the deeds of those who worshipped the Name, plied the sword, ate and distributed their food in companionship, and overlooked others' faults, O Khalsa, utter Wāhguru!

O Deathless Creator, illimitable, this creature

forgetting Thy name is so attached to worldly goods, that he hath forgotten the Real Thing. Without Thy supreme mercy, how shall we cross the ocean of the world? O great King, lust, wrath, greed, worldly love, jealousy, and other evil passions greatly trouble our minds, but on coming towards Thee worldly maladies and afflictions are healed and dispelled. Show us such favour that we may by word and deed be Thine, and that in all things we may obtain Thine assistance and support.

Grant to Thy Sikhs the gift of Sikhism, the gift of the Guru's instruction, the gift of faith, the gift of confidence in Thee, and the gift of reading and understanding the holy Granth Sāhib.

May the Sikh choirs, mansions, and banners ever abide! Victory to the faith! May the minds of the Sikhs be humble but their intellects exalted! Utter Wāhguru! Wāhguru!! Wāhguru!!!

We offer this Ardas in Thy presence and at Thy lotus feet. Pardon our errors and mistakes. May all Sikhs who read and hear the Gurus' hymns be profited!

Through Nānak, may Thy name, O God, be exalted,

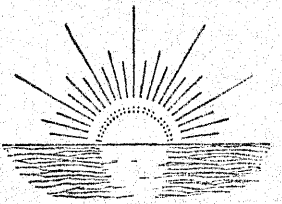
And all prosper by Thy grace!

Sri Wāhguru ji ka Khalsa! Sri Wāhguru ji ki Fatah!

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